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1 Queen Elizabeth haunted by Time and Death

*From the painting at Corsham Court, Wiltshire*



# LONDON FABRIC

*By*  
*JAMES POPE-HENNESSY*

ILLUSTRATED FROM PAINTINGS,  
DRAWINGS, PRINTS AND  
PHOTOGRAPHS

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*To*  
*CLARISSA*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THE Publishers must acknowledge their obligation to the owners of the pictures which are reproduced in this book, and in particular to Lord Methuen for permitting the reproduction in colour of the portrait of Queen Elizabeth which forms the frontispiece. They are also indebted to Miss Joan Eyres-Monsell (figs. 29 and 30) and Mr. A. F. Kersting, F.R.P.S. (figs. 3, 4, 5 and 51), who took photographs specially for the book. The photograph of Layer Marney Gatehouse (fig. 10) was taken by the late Brian C. Clayton.

## PREFACE

THIS book, an attempt to recall a few of the associations dormant in some London buildings, is quite as much the fruit of the crisis of September 1938 as National Service or the black, snouted faces of the gas-masks, grinning in invasion. During those tense autumnal days I wandered round the city, wishing both to distract my mind and to view, as it then seemed, for the last time the places I like. From this sombre tour emerged a conviction that if one was to try to write about London it had better be at once. For all that to me makes this city worth living in (all, that is to say, which the contractors have spared) is literally indefensible. The placid courtyards of the Charterhouse, the chapel of St. Edward in the Abbey, are things no A.R.P. can save; and with the certainty of this trite discovery fresh upon me I began this subjective survey. If the tide of my conviction of imminent danger has, illogically, ebbed it has at least left high and dry behind it something concrete if ineffective—a book.

Apart from the stimulus spasmodically provided by these macabre reflections, I have been encouraged to persist in my endeavour by the unremitting interest of my mother. To Mrs. William Sitwell, also, I owe thanks for the many hours we spent together last winter, walking beneath the bare branches of the plane-trees in St. James's Park, discussing the fabric of this book.

J. P.-H.

74 AVENUE ROAD

*May 1939*

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## CRYPTS

I MADE Perdita promise, before we went down to the crypt, to tell me frankly whether she liked it. I did this because I have found by experience that crypts are rather a special, not to say an acquired, taste. It is one that is not widely shared. I have not yet forgotten the acid protests of six or seven people induced, one hot August morning, to leave the intoxicating beauty of the windows and the nave of Chartres Cathedral, to stumble after me along the damp intersecting tunnels of the crypt, with the little early altars, the stained plaster walls, and the faint inadequate blinking of the oil lamps. Myself, I enjoyed this expedition immensely. The crypt was cold and authentically mysterious, and my only regret was the garishness of the modern frescoes. At that time I had not read Huysmans, but I think I should like it more than ever now. This taste for the subterranean I attribute entirely to Harrison Ainsworth. As a child I early developed a passion for this neglected author, and at one moment I insisted on keeping both *Windsor Castle* and *The Tower of London* beside the night-light on my bedroom table. Later on, at school, I read and re-read all his work, revelling in the complicated, gloomy stories of dungeons and tombs, underground torture-rooms, graveyard trysts, owls, bats, murderers, and mandrakes. It was a feast to stimulate anyone's appetite for the macabre. And even more formative than the natural genius of the author, there were the Cruikshank illustrations of the edition in the school library. Sunday after Sunday I would sit all day over these books, and, my eyes tired out with reading the small, tight print, I would peer into the twilit world of the engravings, those dim chambers where cloaked figures glide between squat, twisted pillars, where coffins burst open and reveal their ghastly secrets, and skeletons are heaped recklessly in odd

corners, their wrists riveted and chained. There was an exciting three-dimensional quality about these pictures. One felt one could crawl into the long, eerie passages, and join in the ghoulish games of hide-and-seek going on there between assassins and their victims, body-snatchers and the night watch, doomed, bony Catholic prisoners and Tudor minions. I remember especially the hideous death of Lady Ravenswood, shown suffocating in the marble sarcophagus where she had rashly sought refuge.

Soon my whole life was overshadowed by the world of the Gothic novel. Ruins and tombstones became a predominating interest of existence, and half-holidays were spent combing Somersetshire woods and villages. One church particularly, not very far from school, standing alone in a steep, wooded valley, a chain of five stagnant lakes beside it, I constantly visited. The graveyard was full of rickety Caroline tombstones, with crude whorls of decoration, and the names, many times repeated, of the few prosperous families of the village on the hill. More interesting still were the visible traces, in the field beyond the churchyard wall, of another village which, once clustering about the deserted church, had been wiped out by the Black Death. The surface of the field was broken by long, low barrows, quite different from those of the Roman camp on the other side of the Fosse Way. These, it seemed tolerably certain, marked the sites of the plague pits. The grass of the field always seemed to me peculiarly lush and sinister, but looking back I find it hard to believe that this was the continued effect of fourteenth-century corpses. This church (which, having no regular vicar, was seldom used) became, when I was between the ages of twelve and thirteen, the Mecca of my daily life. I have never minded being alone, and often I would spend whole misty winter afternoons sitting on a table-tomb in the churchyard, reading Ainsworth and muffled up in a woollen scarf. Other days I would spend tramping through the neighbouring wood in my gum-boots, watching for a pair of owls which nested in the lichened depths of a deserted mill by one of the ponds. Owls and



bats fitted naturally into my Gothic scheme, and one day to my delight I found a dazed bat lying on the floor of the church. Taking it back with me, I kept it for some weeks, feeding it on squalid fragments of raw meat. Soon I wanted to add others to it, and a systematic search for bats began to occupy my spare time. All that I now remember of this curious phase is the creaking, peevish cry of the bats and, in contrast, the soft and sibilant names—*noctule*, *pipistrelle*—of the various species. I remember, too, the scared surprise of bluff Somersetshire vicars, begged for permission to scabble about among the bell-wheels of the church tower on my unwholesome errand. Later, when all this had matured into the more conventional pursuit of brass-rubbing, these same clergymen, reassured no doubt by the rolls of ceiling paper and the pockets bulging with heel-ball and dusters, would welcome one with friendly, sedate enthusiasm. But brass-rubbing was somehow an unimaginative substitute for the world of Ainsworth, and the results were invariably disappointing. Hours of exhausting work face down on a dusty floor, hymn books and hassocks around one, would produce greyish, uneven impressions of the brasses, quite unlike the trim, uniform blackness of the illustrations in the handbooks. Furtive attempts to improve one's rubbings with Indian ink proved profitless: at best the ink would trickle harmlessly about over the shiny waxed surface, at worst the white incised lines would themselves get obliterated. And so I gave up brasses, but I have not rid myself as easily of vaults. They are no longer, admittedly, a dominant passion. During ten years a succession of other interests has superseded them, all perhaps equally devoid of ultimate value. For Harrison Ainsworth provided me with a point of departure, from which radiated numberless paths for exploration, much as the formal rides of a French forest spread star-wise from some small rococo hunting-box at its centre. Everybody, I suppose, has an author to whom they owe the original orientation of their minds. For myself I do not doubt that it is Ainsworth who is to blame for a diffuse, inexpert interest in architecture, archaeology, literary

oddities and the sixteenth century in England, which I have been told precludes, at twenty-one, the possibility of my being considered a "serious person." In the process of expansion inaptly called "growing up," one's first benefactor becomes quickly submerged in the mind. With Ainsworth this ingratitude was inevitable. I have never re-read his novels, nor do I think I should enjoy doing so. It is the old providence of the right man at the right moment. To turn back to Ainsworth, and to find his style verbose, his plots absurd, the harrowing pictures merely so many nineteenth-century grotesques, would be foolish and depleting. Once or twice I have recaptured for an instant the full flavour of those early, morbid days—listening to an actor in Regent's Park commence the tantalizing story of Mamillus in *The Winter's Tale*: "There was a man dwelt by a churchyard," or coming unexpectedly upon the mysterious lines of Beddoes:

The courage of the dog no man denied  
Who had not heard the ghostly bugle blow;  
Nor might suspicion turn its face aside,  
It was not far away but long ago.

But these whiffs of the macabre, like Proust's magic morsels of *madeleine*, lose their effect on repetition. It is the sudden stab of memory, the picture of the dark school library after High Mass on Sunday; or the cold, crisp morning walks to some Gothic belfry on the horizon, across Somerset fields full of mushrooms and mist; or the silence of the empty church by the wood, and the funny way the ground shelves up on the north side to the distant, ramshackle farm.

Perhaps it is in a search for this lost time that I like to look at crypts. I no longer make a bee-line for them on entering a church, but all the same I feel thwarted if they are shut and locked. Perdita did not appear to share my taste, but I had hardly expected her to do so. It was an almost deliberate thirst for contrast that had made me bring her to Bow Church. Standing dutifully beside the verger in

the low, dank vault, she looked, with her freshness and her swinging golden hair, like a Hans Andersen princess in a dungeon. It was hard to know what she was thinking. There is about her a withdrawn aloofness that just misses being haughty and widely misses being absurd. It is an unmodern quality, and I find it arresting. Yet there is nothing pre-War or Victorian in her; she demands, I think, a French background, the pillared elegance of the Second Empire, or the lofty saloons of Versailles to frame her to perfection. We had first met at dinner somewhere a week or two before. She had arrived late, coming quickly into the room with a charming, evanescent shyness, smiling a private smile. But she is not really a shy person, it is only the aloofness she shows at times. She has a fine, small head, and her face is rather round and dimpled, lacking the hungry sculptural lines admired to-day. Her hair, lemon-gold, and glossy like the gilt of a good binding, is combed smoothly to her shoulders and turned in at the ends. She has careful Tissot curls above her forehead. She holds her head straight and high.

The first evening I saw her she had on a white dress; this morning—it was late October—she was wearing a kind of burnt umber colour, which I liked because it made one think of chrysanthemums and the velvety Chinese ducks in St. James's Park. She looked so lovely and vivid, standing like that, beneath the blunt brick arches, that I selfishly wanted to stay and gaze at her indefinitely. She had different ideas, though, and it was obvious that she was tired of the verger's monotonous prattle. The old man was inexorable. Leading us into an inner chamber, he pressed us to admire three stumpy pillars of no very evident merit, and explained how cunningly they epitomize the church's architectural history. The shafts, he said, were Roman, the bases Saxon, and the capitals Norman, while the whole amalgam stands upon a block hewn to the order of Wren. Murmuring our insincere homage to these unexciting objects, we backed up the stairs and out into the brisk air of Cheapside.

St. Mary le Bow is my favourite among the Wren churches, although I think it shares with them all the vacant atmosphere of the assembly-room, the feeling they give you that the perfectly proportioned walls, the narrow galleries, the white expanses of plaster and the hooped windows have little to do with religion. That, I fancy, is why tourists and stray lunch-time visitors seldom seem out of place in them, even in St. Paul's. The laudatory tablets on the walls, the blank face of the altar, and the waiting chairs fail somehow to correct this impression in my mind. It is not that the City churches lack atmosphere. On the contrary they have a great deal. But they succeed, with their air of musty sophistication, in making one regret the secular glories of a past age, rather than in inspiring any vivid anticipation of those of a life to come. Spiritually they are unstimulating; to comment on them as architectural achievements would be impertinent. I have often thought, wandering about the City in my lunch-hour, what an enormous debt, as a Londoner, one owes to Wren. The number of his churches is amazing, even remembering that they replace those destroyed in the Great Fire. Seen from the dome of St. Paul's, the city seems peppered with Wren's pinnacles and steeples, as if they had been liberally shaken out from some giant castor in the sky. The steeple of St. Mary's is remarkably good. It succeeds, with a tapering Renaissance grace, that from which Bow bells pealed out Dick Whittington's recall. Freeing itself from the tangle of little, immemorially old streets on the east—the compact intricacy of Bread Street and Milk Street, King Street and Queen Street—and rising clear of the fummy caravan of modern Cheapside traffic to the west, it reaches up to the top floors of the office-buildings beside it with a slender solemnity that seems part and parcel of seventeenth-century England. But churches, like the trees in the German proverb, do not stretch only to the sky. Beneath Wren's rectangular structures there lurk the remains of older, less self-conscious buildings. It was from this crypt, for centuries the dank meeting-place of the Court of Arches, that we had now emerged.

"Well," I said to Perdita, "and what do you think of crypts?"

She smiled vaguely: "I don't know if they're quite my sort of thing," she answered, "do you? I mean, I wouldn't want to see one again too soon."

"I don't agree at all," I said. "In fact, they are so much your setting that you ought to live in one permanently. And as for not seeing another too soon, we are now going straight to the crypt of St. Paul's. But that is airy, and the floor is rather fun, and you won't mind it at all."

We walked up the steps of St. Paul's, and in through the door on the right of the central façade, Perdita's heels clip-clipping on the black and white marble of the floor. In St. Paul's people tend to look silly and dwarfed. They scuttle to and fro like purposeless marionettes, or sink lethargic and impressed into the doll's-house chairs of the transepts. Beside the visible proofs of Wren's symmetrical vision the slightest physical defect is magnified, and human beings look badly made. But Perdita was not affected by her surroundings. Her head well up, she walked down the centre of the south aisle, past the ornate tremendous columns, with detached assurance. The great heroic statues in the window-bays gazed down at her from their pedestals with white expressionless eyes. Used to making human beings feel Lilliputian, they seemed to resent the way Perdita stood up to their grandeur. But at least she was not laughing at them. It is easy to smile at these gigantic figures, embodying a pompous reverence for the obvious, classical virtues of which psychoanalysis has since taught many people to doubt the existence. The coy nudity of Burges, the lawn-sleeved Nazi salute of Bishop Middleton blessing the heathen, may seem objects almost too potently ridiculous for the glib, sophisticated smirk. But they do represent an attitude to life no more unattractive than the sear, alert detachment of the present day. Nineteenth-century England may have been soggy with hypocrisy, and our ancestors' lives one colossal escape mechanism, but at

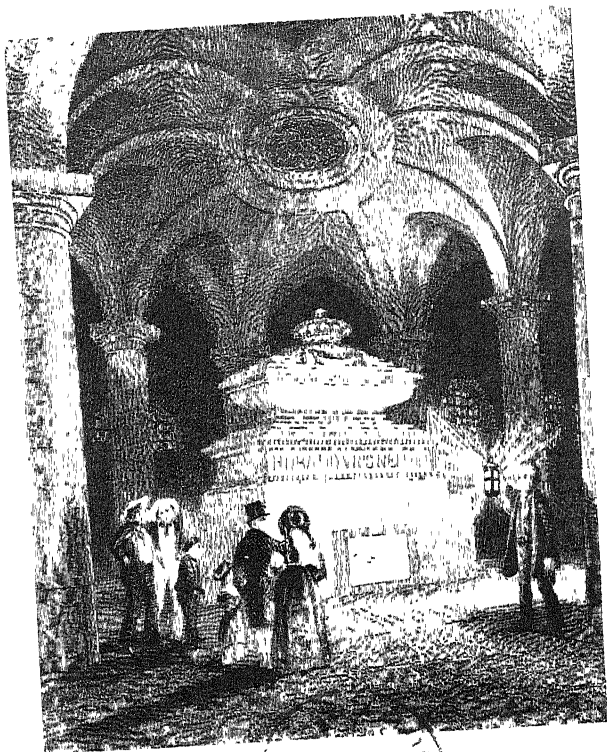
least they knew what they admired, and they said so in letters cut an inch deep on marble blocks the size of a railway carriage. The laurel wreath which Burges accepts from the angel at his feet may be hopelessly incongruous, but it is something which his generation (for some reason I confess I have forgotten) felt that he deserved. His inane distinguished profile and his deprecatory glance, like the piously raised eyes of Bishop Middleton and the deference of the kneeling natives, are representative of a certain attitude to life. It may well have been wholly mistaken, but at least it was found as generally satisfactory as our modern melting pot—with its contents which seem not merely to disintegrate but to dissolve. Perdita had stopped in front of Bishop Middleton.

"I wonder if he *enjoyed* baptizing natives?" she said. "I think it was just a munificent duty. And why don't we have lawn-sleeves in our Church?" (Perdita and I are Roman Catholics.)

"That," I said, replying to her second question, "is a thing I've often wondered; I expect it's the Irish again."

"Again?" she queried vaguely, half-listening.

"Again," I answered firmly; "the difference between the cool dignity of Anglicanism and our own tinsel show in this country is always with me. It is the fault of the Irish. On the one hand you have Salisbury Close, and the Authorised Version, and the gentle erudition of the parson—on the other, Dublin accents and tin shanties, the Sacred Heart statue in plaster, mispronounced Latin and tawdry processions. They have always had the money, and the education; we have only had the Truth. But they seem to have developed along with the national character, unemotional and reserved, while we have gone in for pasteboard imitations of things which are all right on the Continent. Of course, our Litany is superb anywhere; it's the misplaced emphasis that I hate. With the Oxford Movement we did get tinged by that graceful Anglican vesper-light, but the modulations have gone again with the crudity of Catholic Action. It's very sad."



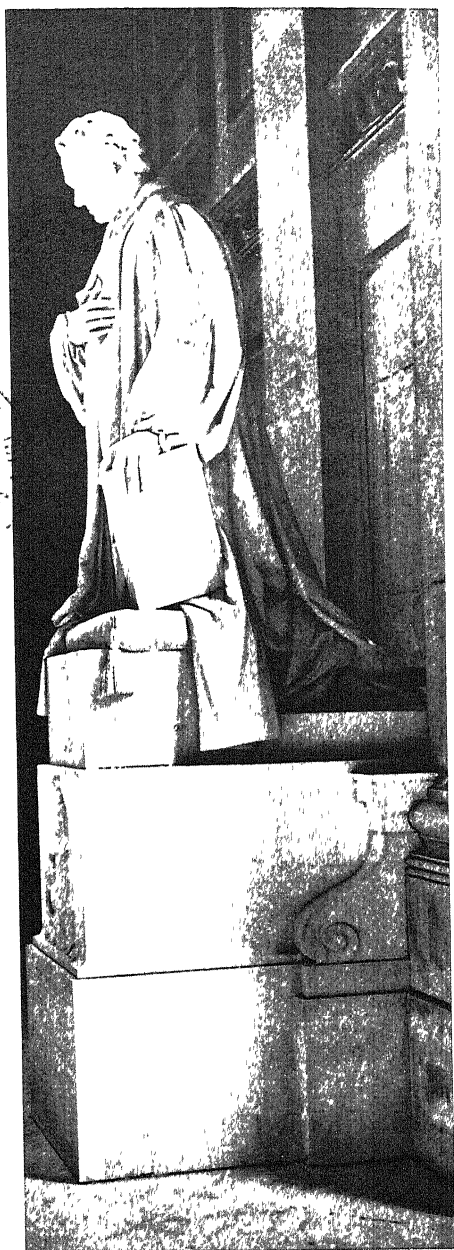
2 Nelson's Tomb in the Crypt of St. Paul's



3 The Crypt of St. Mary le Bow



4 John Donne's  
Monument in  
St. Paul's



5 Bishop Heber's Monument in  
St. Paul's



"I see the point. But do you consider this" (she waved her hand towards Bishop Middleton) "so much worth while?"

"Well, I tend to," I replied. "But what I mean is best shown, I fancy, by a monument up there in the choir—Chantrey's Bishop Heber. Let's go and look at it now."

I led her to the top of the choir, where Heber, a huge, handsome man with a Byronic head and mild, frank eyes, kneels upright on his pedestal. Clad in flowing doctor's robes, propping himself with a large Bible in his left hand, he stares serenely towards the altar. It may be just Chantrey's superiority as a sculptor that makes Heber's monument stand out from its neighbours. Away at the east end of the church, he kneels aloof from the troupe of gesticulating military heroes and posturing victories which choke the transepts. Dignified, but not at all austere, the high, noble forehead and strong hands finely chiselled, he makes both the fussy realism of the battle death-scenes and the static solemnity of statesmen and prison reformers dwindle in comparison. Round him in the choir lie prostrated the ugly images of the Bishops of London on their ornate sarcophagi.

When I first found this statue I had only heard of Bishop Heber as the author of "From Greenland's Icy Mountains." Later I saw references to him as the friend of Walter Scott, and a cultivated contributor to the *Quarterly Review*. But, one day, poking about in a bookshop in St. Paul's Churchyard, I came across a three-volume copy of his *Indian Journal*. This fascinating record of his travels across the diocese of Calcutta, diligent, sensitive and solemn, stimulated the interest Chantrey's figure had aroused. When I had read the *Journal*, the interest became admiration. Leaving England in the summer of 1823, with no expectation that either he or his wife Amelia would see their beloved Edinburgh again, Heber had courageously given up all hope of advancement at home to take over the great bishopric of Calcutta. The voyage was sad, though interesting (the myriad colours of flying fish, the game of guessing the

nationalities of oncoming boats providing entertainment). At first their eyes "swam with tears" as they passed boats bound for the Port of London, and gave their captains letters for home. But India itself was exciting, there was much to observe and record, still more to be done. Touring his vast diocese by carriage, gig, and palanquin, the new bishop set about visiting missions, consecrating burial-grounds, preaching Sunday sermons and hearing schools examinations. As relaxations from this arduous round there were ruined temples to be visited (the uncanny similarity between Eastern and English Gothic to be noted with an exile's joy), pagodas by the Ganges to be sketched for "Little Emily" at home, and then the romantic, restorative beauties of the tamarind and the peepul tree. The bishop, a poet of few pretensions, spent some of his leisure making "loose" translations from the *Ghulistan*, and scribbling wistful-Scott-like verses in the cool of the evening:

Our task is done, on Gunga's breast,  
 The sun is sinking down to rest. . . .  
 Come walk with me the jungle through.  
 If yonder hunter told us true  
 Far off in desert dank and rude,  
 The tyger holds his solitude. . . .  
 Come on! Yet pause! behold us now  
 Beneath the bamboo's arched bough,  
 Where gemming oft that sacred gloom,  
 Glows the geranium's scarlet bloom.  
 And winds our path through many a bower  
 Of fragrant trees and giant flower  
 The ceibas' crimson pomp displayed  
 O'er the broad plantain's humbler shade,  
 And dusk anana's prickly blade,  
 While o'er the brake so wild and fair  
 The betel waves his crest in air.

("I wrote this," he notes pathetically, "endeavouring to fancy that I was not alone.") At times awkward problems would crop up—the obstinacy, for instance, of a Moulavie at Benares who was convinced that he understood the breach between the English and the Roman Catholic Church when he told the bishop that the latter worshipped

pictures and images, the former pictures alone. Then there was the perverse stupidity of the courtiers of an infant nawab in Ceylon, who were unready to acknowledge Heber as a real bishop since he did not wear a beard. The bishop's chaplain, Dr. Robinson, tried to convince these quaint people that in the English Church beards were not a sign of rank, but they would only be satisfied by clinging to a belief that the Primate at least was bearded. Poor harassed Dr. Robinson had to leave it at that. Then, too, the question of suttee was a trouble. The tolerant, cultured mind of the bishop shrank from the details of this rite, much as his body shrank from contact with the dirty Hindoo crowds who would surge round his carriage at the entry to each fresh village. One of the worst things about the "natives" was their inexplicable, wanton disregard for human life, the frequency of suicide done to spite a neighbour or a wife. It was all very difficult, a hard life, but an entralling one, and there were always the architectural curiosities to prevent one's getting stale. Most thrilling of all, though, were the sudden delightful reminders of English scenery—the tomb at Sicligully set on a "rocky eminence . . . rather higher than the Red Castle Cliff at Hawkeston, which . . . it a good deal resembles," and which proved to contain in its core "a carved stone mound, like the hillocks in an English churchyard." There were trees, too, which looked like the scotch firs at home, and pagodas which from some angles might easily be Gothic church towers, and the new market-square at Benares that made one think of Peckwater Quad. He was interested, too, and amused in his mild, gentle way, by the tales of Hindoo and Moslem squabbles, the row between the two sects at Benares which had begun with the Moslems' deliberate defilement of the temple of Vishvayesa with cow's blood, and continued with the Hindoos "throwing rashers of bacon into as many mosques as they could reach"; in the end "the British Government came in with its authority and quelled the disturbance." But in spite of its lighter side, the strenuous travelling and the too-large diocese began to tell on the

bishop's strength. The elegant curls turned grey (his polite Hindoo servant said it was the exercise the bishop took, those twilight walks when he composed his fragments of verse), and the shoulders about which the welcoming natives of Ceylon would throw garlands of bright flowers began to stoop. And then quite suddenly the three years' ministry of this energetic, erudite man, whose charm "had won all hearts," ended with an apoplexy in a swimming-pool at Trichinopoli. The garrisons of south-west India went into mourning for a month, a public subscription for a monument to the "dear bishop" was opened in Calcutta, and his widow set about the melancholy task of editing the bulky diaries and sketch-books left her by husband. It was the result of her work, the three octavo volumes with their microscopic woodcuts of temples and rural scenes, that I had found in St. Paul's Churchyard.

Perdita was standing before Chantrey's monument, looking thoughtful and unsympathetic.

"Of course, I see that it's a *good* figure," she said. "But why do you take it to heart like that? It's just a very charming Chantrey of a handsome bishop."

There was no answer to this. It would have been unjust to quote Wordsworth to her. She has lots of imagination and the logical swiftness of her mind is a continual source of envy to me. For having no vestige of logic myself, I respect it in others. On the whole, though, I think I am fairly happy without it. The side-tracks of fancy have always attracted me more than the permanent way of reason, which anyhow seems overcrowded to-day. But though I find logic uninspiring, this implies no enthusiasm for the nightmare world of whimsy. The feathery credulity of much theosophy, for instance, is to me infinitely more repellent than a good slashing atheism. But brains like Perdita's, quick and amusing, seeing things in silhouette and immensely capable of intelligent judgments, make me feel small and shy. So it was no good trying to dissect my feelings for Bishop Heber for her benefit, and I took her to see John Donne instead.

There is a kind of quivering life about Donne's shrouded figure, high up in its niche. A white marble chrysalis, the lean, bearded face alone peering uneasily from the multitudinous folds of the winding-sheet, he seems pinned to the wall like some entomologist's specimen. At the same time he looks as though he were nerving himself to leap down on to the pavement. The effigy, cut by Nicholas Stone from the picture for which Donne stood, naked in his winding sheet, on a wooden urn by a fire in his bedroom at the Deanery, is the least peaceful of all the cathedral monuments. There is no resignation in the weary face, and the muffled outline of the folded hands. Walton jotted down for us Sir Henry Wotton's comment when the effigy was finished: "It seems to breathe faintly," he said, "and posterity shall look upon it as a kind of artificial miracle." Walton's whole mellifluous passage of the last days of Donne, the slow death and the burial, I find perennially moving. So, too, the opening lines of the "Hymn to God, my God in my sickness," written eight days before he died:

Since I am coming to that holy room  
Where with thy choir of Saints for evermore  
I shall be made Thy music, as I come  
I tune my instrument here at the door,  
And what I must do then, think here before.

It was a protracted death-bed: "I am afraid that Death will play with me so long," he wrote in his last extant letter, to his friend Mrs. Cokayne, "as he will forget to kill me." But, dying, this strange, superb man kept all his wits about him. He repeats, in the same letter, the advice he had given to Mrs. Cokayne's protégé, one Hazard, an importunate young man to whom Donne had refused a coveted living: "Mr. Hazard is too piercing. It is good counsel (and as I remember I gave it him) if a man deny him anything and accompany that denial with a reason, he is not too searching, whether that be the true reason or no, but rest in the denial"—the feasible wisdom of this world recollected on the threshold of the next. Emaciated and alert, Donne

lingered on, calm but for a moment's flurry at the possible loss of his papers after his death (an apprehension fully justified by later events). But at length, murmuring, "I were miserable that I might not die," and closing, "many periods of his faint breath by saying often, 'Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,'" he "disposed himself in such a posture as required not the least alteration by those that came to shroud him, and died." Walton describes the burial, in a place chosen by Donne himself, close to which he had used to pass daily "to pay his public devotions to Almighty God." And then comes the magniloquent relation of the incident of the flowers:

"To which place of his burial some mournful friends repaired, and, as Alexander the Great did to the grave of the famous Achilles, so they strewed his with an abundance of curious and costly flowers, which course they . . . continued morning and evening for many days, not ceasing till the stones that were taken up in that church to give his body admission into the cold earth—now his bed of rest—were again by the mason's art so levelled and firmed as they had been formerly, and the place of his burial undistinguishable to common view."

Whether the figure's present position in the choir of Wren's cathedral bears any relation to its original place in the old church, I do not know. Stuck up in the wall late in the nineteenth century, it bears here and there upon its milky surface, faint iodine-tinted traces of the flames of the Great Fire.

Perdita's reaction to it startled me. She had once confessed to a quite exaggerated devotion to Donne, and I knew that she sometimes spent earnest, unsuitable mornings, interned in the colourless depths of University College in Bloomsbury, attending classes in the Metaphysical Poets. So naturally I thought it would be fun for her to see Donne's monument. But not at all. No sooner had she glanced up at the effigy than she turned sharply away:

"No," she said. "No, I can't bear it. It's *quite* horrible. Please, couldn't we go to something else?"

"He does," I said relentlessly, "look realistically dead, doesn't he?"

"What's wrong is that he's not nearly dead enough," she answered. "Please, let's go."

"All right," I said. "We'll go down to the crypt. No, it won't be the frying-pan and the fire, because you'll adore this crypt. But I wish you enjoyed Donne more, I thought it would be so nice showing it to you."

"Well, isn't it?" she said.

"Not when you treat him like something in the basement at Madame Tussaud's. But let's go downstairs."

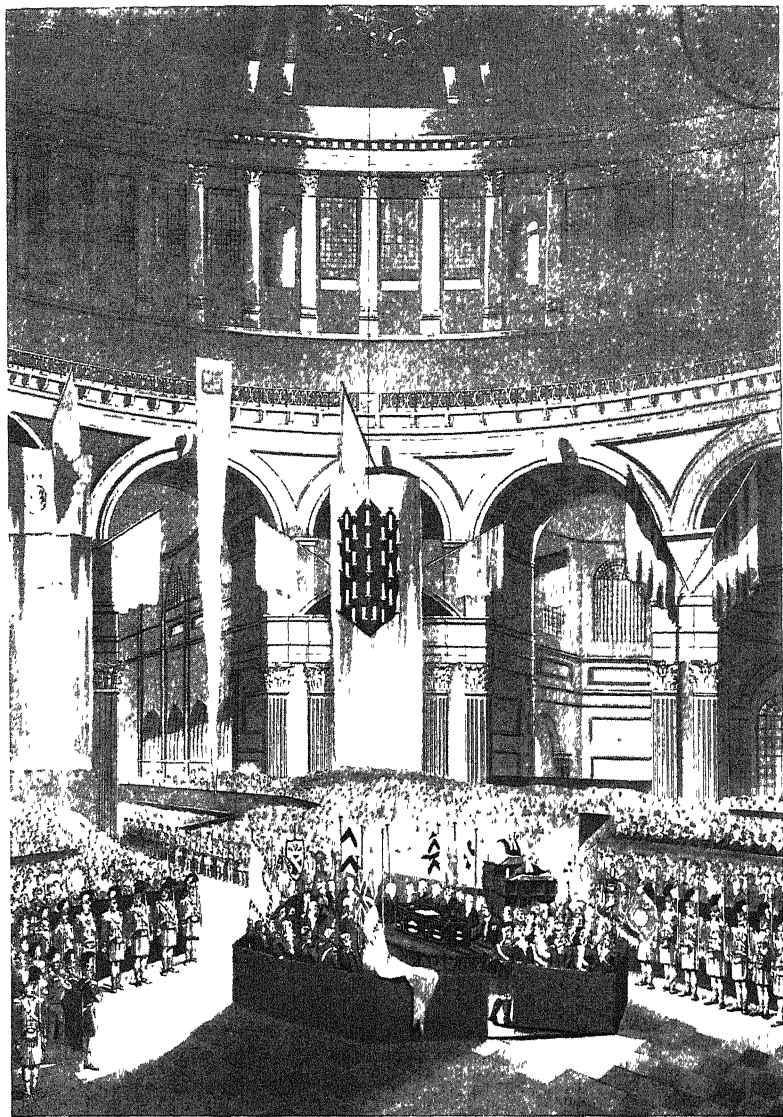
To go down into the crypt of St. Paul's is to walk into the nineteenth century. The spacious vaults, running from one end of the cathedral to the other, contain within their stepped alcoves, beneath the arches and the iron grilles, the corpse of almost every English hero of the last hundred and fifty years. The grand imperial mosaic that one feels their bodies must make under the paving-stones is, or should be, inspiring. There is here less incongruity than in other mausoleums. The great lie cheek by jowl with the great. A certain amount of self-determination was at one time permitted, the scrupulous execution, for instance, of Turner's dying wish to be laid as near Reynolds as possible. His other demand—made it is said in a fit of temper—that *Carthage* should be his shroud was, not surprisingly, ignored. But though none of the great dead in St. Paul's have any very strange bedfellows, one of them at least has a rather strange bed. The body of Nelson, his lead coffin enclosed in a wooden shell ("the most elegant and superb ever seen in Europe"), lies in the sarcophagus destined for Cardinal Wolsey. This anomaly is the outcome of a happy coincidence. Dean Milman relates how at the very moment of the arrival in this country of Nelson's corpse (preserved in brandy, the frequent, necessary changing of which had given a good deal of trouble on the voyage from Gibraltar),

George III was busy with his scheme for converting St. George's Chapel at Windsor into a burial-place for his own family. Wolsey's empty sarcophagus, designed perhaps by Torregiano, was among the objects "thrown aside as useless lumber." What could be more suitable (and, one suspects, more economical), than to enshrine Nelson in this historic piece of porphyry? And so it was that the "fine work, marred in its bold simplicity by a few tawdry coronets" became the last receptacle of that poor, bloated body. Milman, who as a boy watched the magnificent, costly interment (the bill came to £14,000 11s. 6d.) wrote down his impressions in later years. He remembered in particular the "solemn effect of the sinking of the coffin. I heard, or fancied that I heard, the low wail of the sailors who bore and encircled the remains of their admiral." It is hard for people of my age, who can remember only the rain-swept funeral of George V, to imagine how deeply Nelson's death was felt. All Englishmen mourned the loss with real sincerity, though some of them may have chosen to express their sentiments with apparent artificiality:

Round thy thronged hearse those mingling sorrows flow,  
 And seek faint solace in the pomp of woe; . . .  
 Yet not the vows thy weeping country pays,  
 Not that high meed, thy mourning sovereign's praise;  
 Not that the Great, the Beauteous and the Brave  
 Bend, in mute reverence o'er thy closing grave;  
 That with such grief as bathes a kindred bier  
 Collective nations mourn a death so dear;  
 Not these alone shall soothe thy sainted shade,  
 And consecrate the spot where thou art laid.

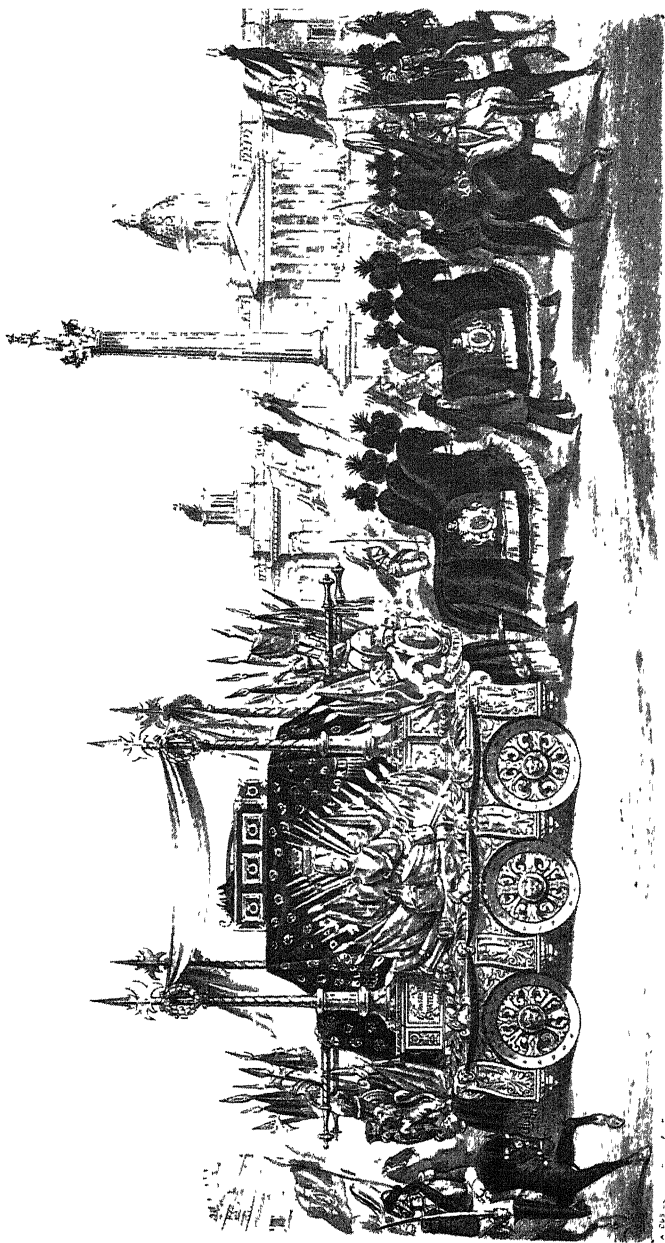
These lines, from George Canning's *Ulm and Trafalgar*, became widely popular. The man who thus voiced the national grief had dined with Nelson on board the *Victory*, the very afternoon of his final departure from England in September 1805, and he was one of the last civilians to shake him by the hand. Scott's more famous jingle echoes the sense of desolation:





## 6 Nelson's Funeral Service

*From a contemporary print*



## THE STATE PROCESSION & FUNERAL CAR.

OF THE LATE DUKE OF WELLINGTON, NOV<sup>R</sup> 18<sup>TH</sup> 1852

7 Wellington's Funeral Car

*From a contemporary print*

To mute and to material things  
New life revolving summer brings; . . .  
The vernal sun new life bestows  
Even on the meanest flower that blows;  
But vainly, vainly may he shine  
Where glory weeps o'er Nelson's shrine . . .  
Say to your sons—Lo, here his grave  
Who victor died on Gadite wave!  
To him as to the burning Levin  
Short, bright, resistless course was given.

Posterity has proved not to need this last admonition. With Byron, Nelson remains to-day the most generally remembered figure of his age in England.

Opposite the Nelson tomb lies the body of Cornwallis, that great Governor-General of India "who laboured with a primitive wisdom to repress the dominant grasping rapacity and insolent contempt of our native subjects." "To few," adds Milman, concluding this singularly frank summary of a famous imperialist career, "to few would the Valhalla of England open her gates with more alacrity than to the Marquess Cornwallis."

Nearly fifty years after Nelson's death, Milman himself was to officiate as Dean of St. Paul's at a yet more gorgeous funeral. The crypt of the cathedral holds two memorials of the Duke of Wellington. One, the vast sarcophagus of red Cornish marble in which his body lies. The other, the high black structure of his hearse, which, cast in iron in the space of sixteen days, plastered with bronze reliefs, beflagged with trophies, draped in velvet and carrying a novel mechanism by which the ornate canopy could be cranked down as the cortège passed beneath Ludgate Bridge, now looms menacingly in the half-light at the extreme west end of the crypt. The carefully planned arrangements for this terrific funeral were not, owing to lack of time, properly carried out. As it was November the authorities had decided that it would be more impressive to "exclude the dull, dubious . . . light of day," by blacking out the windows. In the semi-darkness each architectural feature was to be outlined by rows of little artificial lights.

The effect was spoiled by the scurry with which it all had to be done. Large numbers of workmen were still busy on the very morning of the funeral. But the number and quality of the attendance was consoling—nearly 15,000 people packed the church, including a full complement of both Houses of Parliament, all the foreign ambassadors, civic officers, city companies, cathedral clergy “and their friends.” Then, too, the illumination of the dome at least was an undeniable success, the “graceful coronal of light” which shone down from the Whispering Gallery. On this occasion the efficiency of Wren’s acoustics was especially noticeable, and the Dean had the satisfaction of knowing that his voice could be heard in every corner of the cathedral; as for the responses they “fulfilled the sublime Biblical phrase, ‘Like the roar of many waters.’” The moving ceremony ended with the “gradual disappearance of the coffin . . . into the vault below . . . a sight which will hardly pass away from the memory of those who witnessed it.” Truly Sir Thomas Browne’s reflections: “What a noble animal is man, splendid in ashes, pompous in the grave,” seems especially applicable to our nineteenth-century ancestors.

I showed Perdita all these things, and the hideous plaque to Florence Nightingale as well. She appreciated the Wellington hearse, but it was at a monument back at the other end that her eye really lit up. In the privacy of the underground sanctuary, roped off from common approach, lie some alabaster effigies. Broken at the knees, the gilt paint charred and faded, they are grim survivals from old St. Paul’s. All of them in their pristine state represented Elizabethan grandees. Sir Thomas Heneage is here, beside his wife Anne, a friend of Queen Elizabeth and daughter of Sir Nicholas Poyntz of Iron Acton, that parrot-faced man whose profile can be seen among the Holbein heads at Windsor. Close by the Heneages lies the legless trunk of Sir Nicholas Bacon, the corpulent Lord Keeper with such a reputation for wit, and so profound a distrust of Mary Queen of Scots. It is said that when he would arrive,

panting, to preside over his court, he used to pause a few moments and then tap the floor three times with his staff as a sign that he had recovered his breath. With their four or five mutilated contemporaries, these dingy fragments are all that St. Paul's now has to offer of the ostentatious vitality of the Tudor world. But it was not they that had intrigued Perdita. She had found, by a window to the south of them, the Martin monument. This is a high wall-tomb, with Wren-like columns and architrave, full of swirling movement. John Martin and his wife kneel ecstatically on either side of a central pyramid of books. In front of each of them a large folio volume is propped open against the pile. Martin wears a furred gown and a full-bottomed wig, his wife a loose Biblical garment and a cloth folded over her head. He raises his hands in incredulous surprise, she holds hers together in an attitude of prayer. Below them, carved on the front of the tomb, is an odd but decorative relief of three cherubim, between two dead babies. The fat little faces of the babies, their eyes tight shut in death, are framed in elaborate close-fitting caps of lace, and their bodies, bound in pleated shrouds, are curved slightly to conform to the general rotundity of the design. On each side of the babies are oval wreaths neatly tied up with jaunty ribands. The whole monument, beautifully carved, forms in every sense an excellent example of the baroque in England.

I don't think Perdita had noticed the babies, for she was so enthusiastic:

"But I like this better than anything else we've seen," she whispered. "Why did we leave it to the last? I don't believe you were going to show it at all. Were you?"

I did not answer at once, for I was thinking of something else. Near the Martin tomb is a shallow recess from which one can see a good deal of the crypt. In this recess there was at one time a little rush-bottomed chair. I know this because I had put it there myself. Some time ago, two years at least, I used to find this crypt extraordinarily consoling when one was suffering from a bout of that black

depression which I fancy attacks many people somewhere near nineteen. I am not suggesting that depression is limited to that age, but I do think that there is a strange intensity about these meaningless youthful moods. Older people do not, I suspect, ever really understand how to deal with this *malaise* of the very young, they have forgotten that it is the duration of one's despair that matters, not the seeming futility of its cause. Indeed, I seem to remember that the "less there was to be depressed about" the more depressed one became. I have occasionally wondered if it has not something to do with a first realization of the actuality of death. All through one's childhood and school-days one was subconsciously convinced (I speak only for myself) that one would not die; as one verges on the twenties, I think, it is suddenly brought home to one that everything dies, and that Time Marches On. The inexorable escalator of nights and days seems speeded up, and there is no emergency brake. In any case there I would sit despondently in the vaults under St. Paul's, meditating on death and wondering whether I should ever have a strong character. I don't know why it was such an immensely pacifying atmosphere. I would creep out of my near-by office (I worked then in Paternoster Row) and, paying my sixpence slink down the sloping staircase to the crypt, and sit there for a few minutes in the cold stillness.

Though I was thinking of those days I didn't tell Perdita about them. There seemed no point. The chair had been moved away, and anyhow that sort of thing inevitably sounds tawdry and affected when repeated. So I joined her in admiring the originality of the Martins' tomb and then we went up and out of the cathedral. It had been foggy earlier in the morning, but the haze had melted when we stepped out through the great West Door of St. Paul's and the autumn sun was glinting on the gilt of Queen Anne's sceptre. Her plump, regal figure seemed to shimmer on its pedestal as she gazed with her eternal fixity down Ludgate Hill to Fleet Street and the Strand.

## HAMPTON COURT

THE gardens at Hampton Court to-day are very far from being what they were under the Tudors. Henry VIII, who included horticulture among his many interests, took some trouble to have the setting of Wolsey's palace made worthy of his own court. It was an heraldic age, and heraldry predominated in his scheme. Beds of red and white roses, symbolic of the happy union of Lancaster and York, were enclosed by low wooden railings painted in the King's livery colours, white and green. These barley-sugar surrounds stood upon little walls of brick, some eighteen inches high. At regular intervals along the paths rose green and white posts, painted chevron-wise, and pillars of freestone carrying the fantastic freestone animals known as the King's and Queen's Beasts. These creatures were again heraldic in origin, dragons, lions, harts, "grehwondes," and "Innycornes," and they clutched in their hooves and paws gilded vanes of metal bearing the royal badges. There is a true Tudor lavishness about the outdoor accounts for Hampton Court. Thirty-eight beasts were ordered in a batch to be put "abowght the ponddes in the pond yerd," and one hundred and eighty posts and sixteen brazen sundials went into the "Kynges new garden." It was the same with the flowers. Besides the roses, large quantities of sweetwilliams, violets, primroses, "gilliver-slips," and "mynts" were planted. The beds were manured with "strawberry rot" and weeded by women at twopence a day. Apple, pear, and cherry trees filled the two orchards, and elsewhere in the garden numberless yews, hollies, cypresses, junipers, and bays were set. Woodbines and thorns for hedges were bought by the hundred, and quicksets for the Triangle at the Mount.

In the gallery at Hampton Court hangs a long, narrow

picture of Henry VIII and his family, painted late in the reign. He sits in the centre of a pillared hall, his arm about the shoulders of Edward VI, with one of his queens beside him and the two daughters standing meekly by. At either end of this panel doors are shown opening on to the palace garden. In the doorways gape those pathetic apanages of every sixteenth-century court—the jester, Will Somers, a hooded monkey on his shoulder, and Jane, the female fool. Behind these two one gets a glimpse of the garden as it must once have looked. Here are the gay little railings, the brick walls, and best of all, the greyhounds, sitting upright on their stone haunches on the top of octagonal poles. Herbs and green leaves peep up between the railings, and fingers of creeper stretch over the walls. In the background the spiky Renaissance outline of the palace rears itself against a cloudy sky. But now all this has gone, the Privy Garden and the Pond Yard, the cosy pleasure-grounds where the Holbein ladies in their heavy, padded skirts and velvet hoods, and the virile doubled gentlemen, with hair cropped short to the King's order, would romp together in their high-spirited if ingenuous way, playing games which in more sophisticated ages have been thought suitable only for children. In place of the Tudor gardens stretch the arid parterres of William III, with the stately sheets of water cut in imitation of his Dutch canals at home. With these formal foreign alterations the original character of the palace grounds disappeared. From an interesting monument of the English Renaissance, Hampton Court was transformed into a Dutch copy of Versailles.

It was among the arbours and alleys of the old garden that the poet Surrey fell in love with Elizabeth Fitzgerald, fourteen-year-old daughter of the Earl of Kildare:

Hunsdon did first present her to mine eyen.  
Bright is her hue and Geraldine she hight,  
Hampton me taught to wish her first for mine.

The reality of Surrey's legendary sentiments for the Fair Geraldine has been the subject of ceaseless controversy.



Was she, ask the commentators, the adored object of his passionate sonnets? Or was she the pale pretext for a fashionable literary affectation? Did Surrey mean anything at all by lines like these (the rollicking metre alone being thought highly suspect):

When raging love with extreme pain  
 Most cruelly distrains my heart;  
 When that my tears as floods of rain,  
 Bear witness of my woful smart;  
 When sighs have wasted so my breath  
 That I lie at the point of death.

I call to mind the navy great  
 That the Greeks brought to Troy town  
 And how the boisterous wind did beat  
 Their ships and rent their sails adown;  
 Till Agamemnon's daughter's blood  
 Appeased the gods that them withstood.

This unprofitable analysis can go on indefinitely. I, myself (perhaps lacking historical objectivity), do not see any very good grounds for rejecting the traditional claims of the Fair Geraldine. In any case this fascinating adolescent soon married Sir Anthony Browne, and later as a widow of twenty-two prosaically became third wife to the Earl of Lincoln. When the aged earl died three years before the Armada, the countess found herself enmeshed in all the intricacies of a Tudor law-suit with his deranged litigious successor, who would refer to her in his letters to his friends, as "mine ungracious mother-in-law." The end of Surrey's "rake-hell life" is better known, the unjust imprisonment and the final execution at the Tower. His intimate, Wyatt, a more productive poet, had died five years before of a fever, caught on the way to Falmouth to welcome an imperial embassy. Surrey wrote two laments for his death, one of which ("Wyatt resteth here that quick could never rest") contains some of those sudden strong images with which at times he can surprise one:

A head, where wisdom mysteries did frame;  
 Whose hammers beat still in that lively brain,  
 As on a stithe . . .

My attachment to Wyatt and Surrey is almost as old as my affection for Ainsworth, indeed for this, too, I am his debtor. Together with Lord Vaux of Harrowden (author of the grave-diggers' song in *Hamlet*) these two poets seem to me to sum up all that was best in the gaudy entourage of Henry VIII. I think I like Wyatt most of the three. There is a melancholy gaiety about his verses which I find very sympathetic, the song with the refrain, "For the eye is traitor to the heart," and, lovelier still, "Forget not yet":

Forget not yet the tried intent  
Of such a truth as I have meant;  
My great travail so gladly spent  
Forget not yet! . . .

Forget not yet the great assays,  
The cruel wrong, the scornful ways,  
The painful patience in delays,  
Forget not yet!

I had been talking of Wyatt and Surrey to Perdita as we crossed the bridge over the river, on our way from the station. It was a sweltering July day, and we had come to Hampton Court in the dirty little electric train from Waterloo. The river looked very pretty, with the white steamers from Richmond full of trippers, and many private craft bright with parasols and flags. It was all rather like an Edwardian regatta, though I don't think there was anything special doing. On the vivid green banks people were picnicking, and children scrambled about by the water's edge.

"From my point of view," I said to Perdita as we went through the palace gates and across the wide gravel expanse of the car park, "Wren and William III ruined Hampton Court. By destroying the old palace, and putting this splendid building in its place, they swept away the most authentic memorial of the Tudors. With Whitehall burnt, and Richmond Palace a mere remnant, and Eltham horribly rebuilt, there is nothing left that could tell us what the Tudors were really like. Their atmosphere is irretrievably gone."

"But surely," she replied, "everybody hasn't got your thing about the Tudors. Wouldn't you admit that Hampton Court now preserves the feeling of William and Mary, and, wouldn't it be, Anne?"

"No," I said, "I should not. It may be pure prejudice, but I am convinced that the only bits of this place with any atmosphere whatever are the Wolsey rooms (and they've been hashed about) and the Haunted Gallery—and then Edward VI's nurseries and the parts that aren't shown. That wizened little Dutchman and those lethargic Stuart women have left no atmosphere whatever. I suspect they were incapable of creating any. All this is very grand and spacious, but it's entirely negative. I don't believe William III knew how to live, in England anyway. The Tudors were full-blooded, emphatic, gorgeous; William (I'm not talking about politics) must have been drab and warped. I always think of him standing in that dark room at Kensington Palace, looking greedily up at his wind-dial over the fireplace, waiting for a favourable wind to take him to Holland and wheezing with asthma."

"I didn't know about the asthma," she said. "He certainly was no romantic figure."

"It's because I hate him so much, and all his innovations here, that I sometimes try to reconstruct the palace as it was before his time. It's a sort of game, you begin by the parts that are still the same—and there is a great deal, almost all Wolsey's buildings—and you fill them up with all the things that used to be in them——"

"But how do you know what used to be in them?"

"Oh, there are very complete inventories, you know. Well, you fill them up with the things, and the people, and then you go farther and imagine the bits Wren took away—all the New Lodgings, and the splendid chain of rooms built for Anne Boleyn and occupied by Jane Seymour. Well, you just go on like that indefinitely, imagining it all."

"It sounds rather a waste of time," said Perdita. "You must come here a lot."

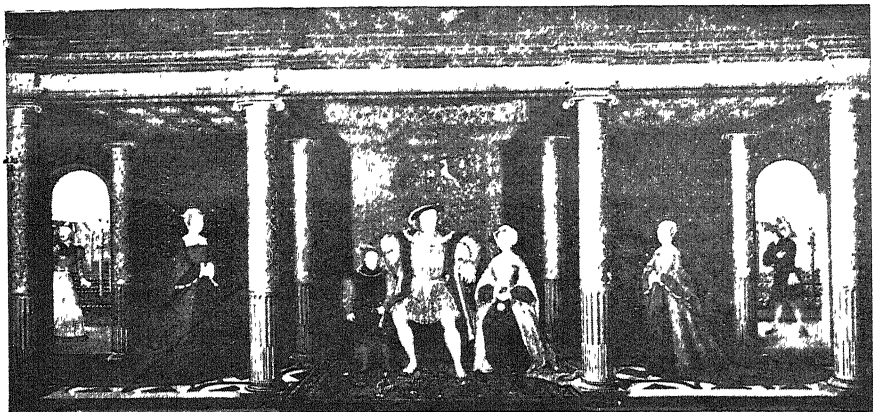
"Yes," I said, "I used to."

"Shall we ignore Wren and William III to-day then," she suggested, "and stick to the sixteenth century? You could tell me about it as we went along."

"Very well then, let's do that," I answered, as we paid our entrance fee at the door.

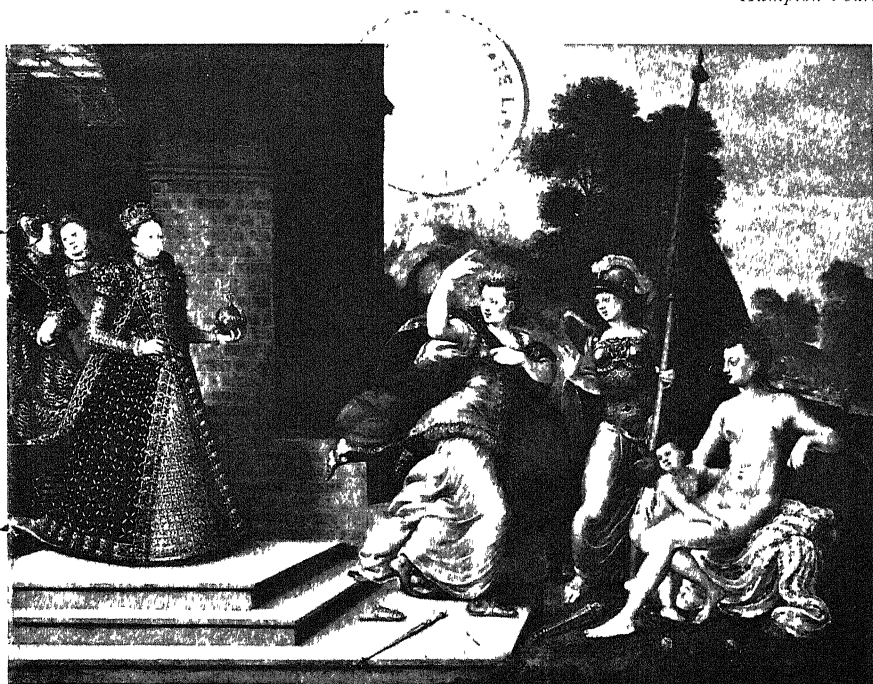
. . . . .

In its heyday, Hampton Court was perhaps the most sumptuous of the Henrican palaces. Just before his fall, Wolsey had been feverishly busy making it as showy and comfortable as he knew how. He had all the lavish taste of the parvenu and in addition a certain knowledge or instinct for collecting. Every room was lined with hangings from the finest Flemish looms (a solitary set, after Van Orley cartoons, now remain in the Great Watching Chamber). The Cardinal's private apartments were hung with tissue of gold. Damascene carpets, obtained through the Venetian Signory, lay on the floors, and even the window-seats were padded with "red window carpets" with gay yellow tassels, many of them sewn with crosses and white flowers. The galleries, those long corridors with windows on both sides and twisted goldwork on the ceiling (an architectural innovation, these, which astounded foreign visitors) and the closets teemed with heavy Renaissance furniture, Italian cabinets, chests, great tables, and high-backed chairs. Some of the chairs were covered in black velvet embroidered with metal thread, others had skins of red or blue leather, or Naples fustian, and fringes of "Venice gold." In the two hundred and eighty bedrooms kept ready for the Cardinal's guests there was a formidable choice of bedsteads—down beds, square beds, trussing beds, "new beds"—with counterpanes of tawny damask, red, yellow, or blue satin, and one of counterfeit arras painted with the Romaunt of the Rose. Cushions figure largely in the inventories, as they did in the lives of the Cardinal's contemporaries. In those days of heavy ceremonial clothes, ease was essential in private rooms, and ladies, exchanging kirtle and ponderous



8 Henry VIII and his Family

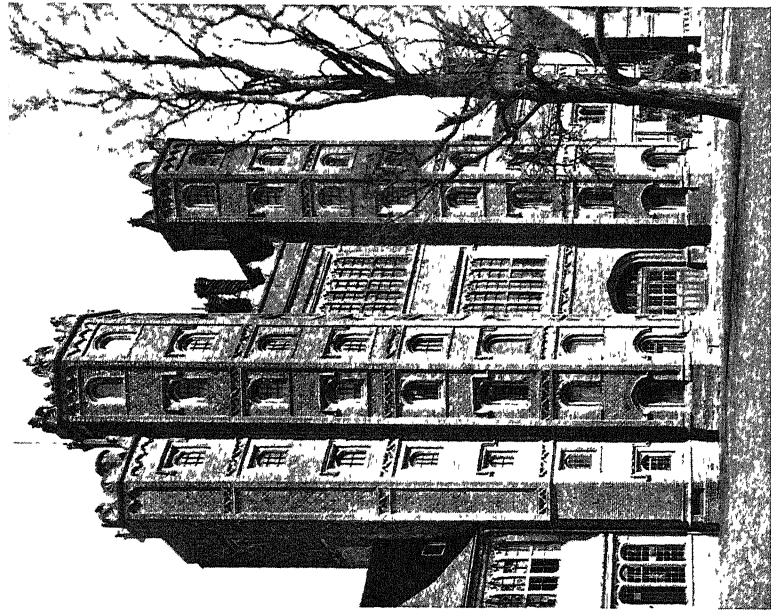
*Hampton Court*



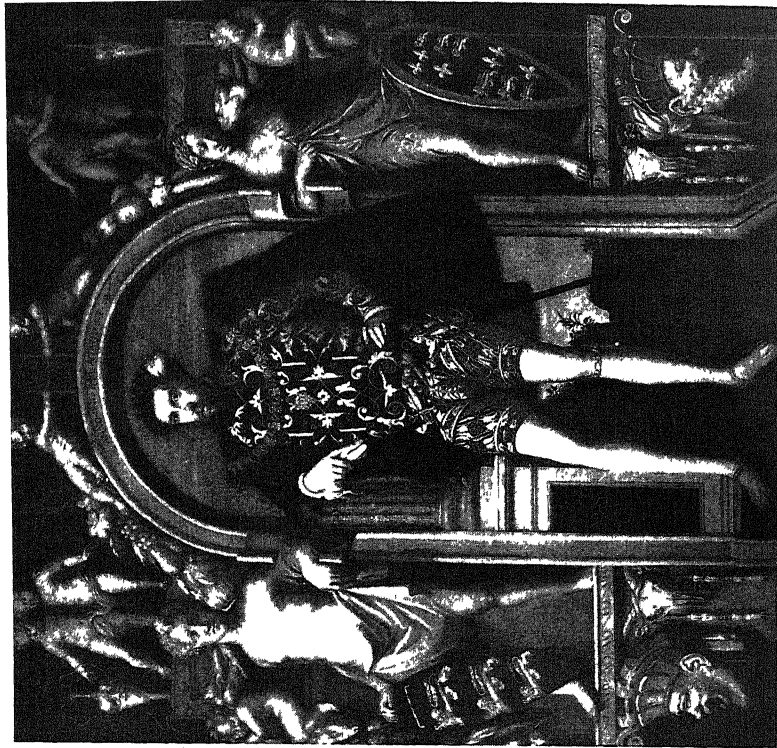
9 Queen Elizabeth greeted by Goddesses

*Hampton Court*

*Reproduced by gracious permission of H.M. The King*



10 Layer Marney Gatehouse, Essex



11 Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey

overskirts for a loose silk garment furred with miniver, liked to sink luxuriously on to banks of cushions on the floor.

The cushions at Hampton Court were of green figured velvet, or violet satin or cloth of gold. There were embroidered cushions, too, with red harts in blue crowns on them, or roses or ragged staves within a chaplet of daisies. In the open fireplaces stood brass andirons, shaped like lions, mermaids, roses, angels and fools. The plate for the tables, and the household "napery" was of suitably rich quality. When Henry VIII took over the huge, luxurious house, he at once set about enlarging it, building more of the fashionable galleries, planning the Great Hall (finished in the year of Anne Boleyn's execution), and separate suits of lodgings for himself and the Queen. There was at first a great deal of minor alteration to be done, the removal of the Cardinal's monograms and badges, and the substitution of the King's. As the years went by Hampton Court and its bewildered workmen saw a lot of this sort of redecoration, the constant changing of the love-knots with the initials of the various queens.

To-day the most vivid reminders of Wolsey's residence at Hampton Court are the great wheels of orange Italian terra-cotta, with the heads of the Roman emperors on them, which are built into the walls of the clock-tower in the base-court. There was once a great deal of terra-cotta about the palace, pinnacles of it on the towers, and probably the frilly Italian edgings to the windows which some people liked so much. This use of terra-cotta can be seen to perfection in a large unfinished house in Essex, built by Lord Marney, the contemporary of Wolsey, who died in 1523. The tall, square gate-house of Layer Marney, with some outbuildings and the church close by, is astonishingly situated among wide, lonely fields, no main road near it, approached only by cart-tracks and a lane with hip-berries and haws. When, as a child, I first saw this remarkable building, an Italianate Tudor shell standing up against a dull English January sky, with the flat Essex horizons all round it, I was deeply impressed. Its lonely position, the warm purple of the bricks,

the gay terra-cotta pinnacles, the cypresses thick about the near-by church, all formed an indelible picture in my mind. I was staying with my aunt and uncle in Essex at the time, recovering from whooping-cough. The other day, a year ago, I suppose, I asked them to let me go again to Layer Marney. I had not seen it for twelve years. I made the request with hesitation, for places, especially those seen when one is nine, are never the same again. And so I was additionally delighted last autumn to find the derelict-looking gatehouse (I believe it is in fact lived in, but it has an incorrigibly deserted air) as exciting as ever, the bricks as purple, and the cypresses as black as I remembered. It had not changed and it could not change. This time I looked more carefully at the terra-cotta window-frames, and the little orange caps at the corners of the towers. In the church is more terra-cotta, a magnificent Renaissance table-tomb with a white canopy of it, under which lies the polished black effigy of the first Lord Marney. Some of Wolsey's Italians from Hampton Court are supposed to have worked at Layer Marney, and there is the same superb solidity about it, and, too, the bleakness of an uncompleted dream.

Local tradition says that Wolsey has left other more sinister memorials of himself at Hampton Court. The great, fat, red spider, with hairy legs, which is often found in buildings along the valley of the Thames infests with an uncanny determination the apartments of the palace. At one time it was thought that these creatures were peculiar to Hampton Court and for centuries a belief that they are in some symbolic way connected with Wolsey's fate has given to them the name of the Cardinal Spiders.

Like other tourists, Perdita and I went first to the "Wolsey rooms." You go up the fine Wren staircase, into the great guard-room, with its walls patterned with steel weapons, arranged to William III's order, and dive suddenly through a low doorway on the right, plunging down a few steps into the three panelled Tudor rooms which are all that remains of the Cardinal's private apartments. Even these are not in their original state. The dividing wall between the first



room and the second, and the linen-fold upon the walls, are late additions. But these rooms contain a number of pictures as important as any in the palace. In the inner one, with the row of windows down one side, and a view of what is left of the Pond Garden, hang two Holbeins, a Durer, Memlinc, Jean Clouet, and two Lucas van Leydens. Before looking at these I made Perdita stop, unwillingly, in the outer room before a portrait of Edward VI.

"You always say you want to know what people look like," I said, "so you must first glance at this."

"Well," she said, "tell me about it."

This full-length of Edward VI is probably the best known of his portraits. Whatever sympathy one may wish to feel for this sickly, short-lived boy must I think be tempered by a certain distaste after any examination of his iconography. In all his portraits the narrowness and the frigid absence of feeling, so apparent in his diaries, comes out strongly. The strange long head and ugly receding ears, noticeable in all of them, are well in evidence in this picture. He wears black velvet, embroidered with gold, and his hand on his dagger, straddles his legs in a lanky imitation of the burly Henrican stance. Behind him is a red brocade curtain, and a pilaster of inlaid marble. This enfeebled boy, by nature more a Seymour than a Tudor, seems to have lacked entirely his father's bluff charm, his sisters' determination. He was born in the palace, in a bed still shown to visitors in Queen Elizabeth's day, and his ceremonial baptism preceded by a week or two his mother's ceremonial burial. Jane Seymour seemed to Charles V's ambassador, Chapuis, a pallid, uninteresting little thing. The envoy was not prejudiced against her, and his account, unlike the salacious details he would report of Anne Boleyn, reads truthfully enough. Jane the Queen, moreover, was firmly anti-French (her marriage meaning the temporary triumph of the Imperialist party at the English court) and exceptionally kind to the Princess Mary. But in spite of this, Chapuis did not think she was up to much. He was a good judge of women, for he had seen the royal ladies of Europe—those

haughty Hapsburg sisters, with their pendulous underlips and strong masculine minds, swinging across Flanders in their sumptuous litters, or hawking on gorgeously trapped horses in the mountains of Spain. He had seen the French king's sister, Marguerite de Valois, that dark-haired, witty woman, who combined considerable learning with a nice taste for the obscene. Best of all he had seen the Empress Isabella, the paragon of that age for beauty and for all the religious virtues, whom Titian painted posthumously in a world-famous picture in the Prado. And beside them, the pale daughter of Sir John Seymour of Wolf Hall must have seemed just nothing at all. She did not come up to Chapuis's standard, she was not what one expected a queen to be. Looking at the pictures of her, the Holbein in Vienna with its variant at The Hague and replicas at Woburn Abbey and elsewhere, it is not difficult to see what Chapuis felt. Her portrait explains, too, in some measure, her son Edward's lack of vitality and charm. Jane Seymour's colourless face, prim, pursed mouth, and squirrel-like hazel eyes are not attractive. One gets the impression that she shared the solemn high-mindedness of the Protector, limited and cold, rather than the boisterous attraction of her other brother Thomas Seymour (who married Queen Catherine Parr at the beginning of his nephew's reign, and behaved so oddly to the Princess Elizabeth: and was finally beheaded by his brother's order). Chapuis tells how Jane, primed perhaps by Edward Seymour, threw herself dramatically on her knees before a messenger of the King, declaring that she could never be his mistress, being "but a poor gentlewoman and having nothing but her honour."

The Queen's political significance was considerable. Her position implied the ascendancy of the Seymours over the Dudleys and also over the old landed nobility. Her marriage, in May 1536, marked the final setting of the Boleyn star, for many months past in a decline. The Earl of Wiltshire, father of the late Queen Anne, had resigned his office as Lord Privy Seal, and been succeeded by Thomas Cromwell. It may have been this change-over which made

the Seymours decide on another family alliance. Edward Seymour, already a viscount, with rooms next those of the King, had, it seems, expected the Privy Seal to be offered to him. Cromwell's success must have been a slight blow, and so in August 1537 another Seymour, Elizabeth Lady Ughtred, widowed sister of the Queen, was married to the new Privy Seal's son, Gregory Cromwell. One would have thought that this new combination, by which the King became brother-in-law to Cromwell's son, would have created a tricky situation. But apparently it was as successful as the royal marriage itself. For the Seymours everything was going swimmingly. The Queen was loved by her husband, rather popular than otherwise in the country, firmly entrenched at court, and in September 1537 the announcement of her approaching confinement put the finishing touch to the Seymour triumph. But it was an ephemeral triumph. By the second week of October Jane the Queen was dead, leaving her brothers nothing but a royal nephew, and clearing the way for the complete dominion of Thomas Cromwell over the King's impressionable mind. Jane's death, following the birth of Prince Edward by a fortnight, was not, as was for long erroneously assumed, the result of a Caesarean operation. It seems simply to have been due to the neglect of her attendants. In any case she died, and Henry, grief-stricken, but intensely anxious to avoid the funeral, fled from Hampton Court.

Jane's embalmed body lay in state for a week, in the black-draped Presence Chamber of the palace, twenty-four tall tapers about it, and an altar "richly appparelled in black, garnished with the cross, images, censers, and other ornaments," where dead Masses were said day and night. Princess Mary and the ladies of the court knelt about the coffin, white kerchiefs over their heads, and, later, it was Mary who headed the funeral procession, riding a horse caparisoned in black. The cortège wound its way up-river to Windsor with the corpse lying on a black chariot of velvet and gold, an effigy of the dead Queen on top of the

coffin, a waxen figure with long flowing hair, a crown on its head and a sceptre in its hand. She was drawn to St. George's Chapel, and there she lies to-day. At St. Paul's a solemn requiem was sung before the Lord Mayor, and the Corporation paid for twelve hundred masses for the repose of her soul. The Catholic note, so predominant in these obsequies, was perhaps due to the King rather than to Edward Seymour, who was later to prove himself such a staunch friend of the Calvinists during his nephew's short reign.

The ghost of Jane Seymour is said to be seen sometimes hovering pallidly about the door of her old apartments. Her appearances seem less well authenticated than those of Edward VI's nurse, Mrs. Sibell Penn, whose whirring spinning-wheel was frequently heard throughout the last century by ladies resident in the palace. Mrs. Penn was recommended to Henry VIII by Sir William Sidney as dry nurse for the infant prince, a year after Jane Seymour's death. She seems to have given satisfaction, judging by the marks of royal favour bestowed on her at various times—the rectory of Little Missenden from King Henry, and later New Year gifts of money from Edward VI. Mary, to whom she would give presents of handkerchiefs “edged with passamyne of golde and silke,” and later Elizabeth, were kind to her, and she had rooms in the palace in both their reigns. She died in 1562 of smallpox, in the same epidemic which nearly killed Elizabeth, and she lies buried under a marble canopy in Hampton Church.

Perdita looked carefully at Edward VI.

“In a way,” she said, “it's rather a subtle face, so alert and disdainful. But not outstandingly human.”

“Well, if you want something human, look at this. An old lady I once knew used to say it was the most obscene portrait of its century.”

I pointed to the double portrait of François I and his wife Eleanora, sister of Charles V. There is a curiously vicious taint about this picture. The king, leering lasciviously, has his arm tight about Eleanora's waist, while she, a golden

caduceus toy held nonchalantly in one hand, a gay feathered hat on the side of her head, looks rakishly up at him from the corner of her eye. In spite of copious repainting, it remains a vivid, peculiar picture. The woman is undeniably Eleanor, yet an entirely different creature from the lymphatic, distinguished princess of the Van Cleve portrait in another room at Hampton Court. She comes, too, into the early series of the four sisters, which hang across the way from Edward VI, in the room in which we were standing. These four women, each an integral part of the Hapsburg network over Europe—*Tu Felix Austria nube*—were widely famous in their day. The English king would as a matter of course have their portraits, and it seems likely that these four pictures are those described in the 1547 inventories of Westminster Palace. They are described, but without names—an omission, possibly, significant of the increased insularity of the English court mind at the close of the reign.

Most of Henry VIII's pictures, carefully protected by curtains of white and yellow sarcenet, seem to have been kept at Westminster. The lists for Nonesuch, Oatlands, Richmond, St. James's, and Hampton Court are meagre in the extreme. The royal collections, largely dispersed under the Commonwealth, were never wholly reassembled in spite of the efforts of Charles II. It is to him that we owe the last picture of interest in this first Wolsey room, the Dutch copy he commanded of the great Holbein fresco, of Henry VIII with his parents and Queen Jane Seymour. This immense wall-painting, showing the two kings and their consorts standing on a stairway on either side of a central block of stone, was destroyed in the fire which burnt out Whitehall Palace in 1689. Swift, writing eight years later *On the Burning of Whitehall*, lamented their loss:

Down come the lofty roofs, the cedar burns,  
The blended metal to a torrent turns.  
The carvings crackle and the marbles rive,  
The paintings shrink, vainly the Henries strive,  
Propt by great Holbein's pencil, down they fall,  
The fiery deluge sweeps and swallows all.

All that we have to help us reconstruct this most important work is this Leemput copy and the fragmentary cartoon at Chatsworth. The condition of the fresco had probably, in any case, deteriorated, and Pepys, who went "with much difficulty by candle light" along the matted gallery at Whitehall, when the floor was being taken up in August 1668, thought it "pity to see Holbein's work in the ceiling blotted on, and only whited over!" The figure of Henry VIII in this fresco, full-face with legs astride, served as model for the innumerable sixteenth-seventeenth century full-lengths of that monarch which clutter the country houses of England to-day.

In the next room hang two genuine Holbeins, and superb ones at that. First there is the exquisite bearded profile of John Reskymer of Cornwall. This head of a man in a black cap against a clear green-blue background, a single strand of vine-leaf breaking the simplicity, is alone worth a visit to Hampton Court. I said as much to Perdita, who agreed.

"It's unbelievably lovely," she said. "*What* a sensitive painter. One can't analyse one's reactions, I can't anyway, but it's magnificent. And to think that somebody told me the other day that his English portraits weren't up to his German ones."

"In a way they were rather right to say that," I answered. "I sometimes think that Holbein deteriorated in England much as Van Dyck is supposed to have done. But then you see Holbein's Basel friends, Erasmus and his lot, with their delicate humanist outlooks, were not in tune with the vulgarity of the English courtiers, Sir Harry Guildford, for instance, even the King himself. Perhaps Reskymer had some special spiritual affinity with Holbein, some Cornish sensitivity or other."

"Did he come from Cornwall?" asked Perdita. "It's a splendidly melancholy face."

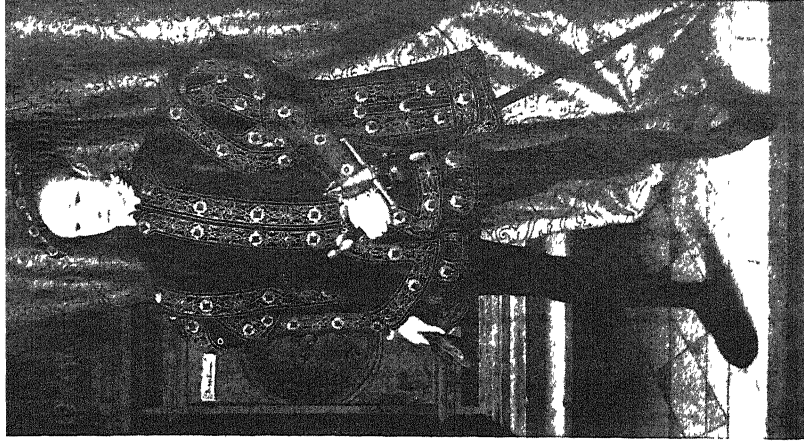
"Yes, he was just a gentleman living on his lands, in Cornwall, where his family had always been. He became High Sheriff, I think, under Mary, and seems to have



12 Francis I and his Queen, Eleanor of Portugal

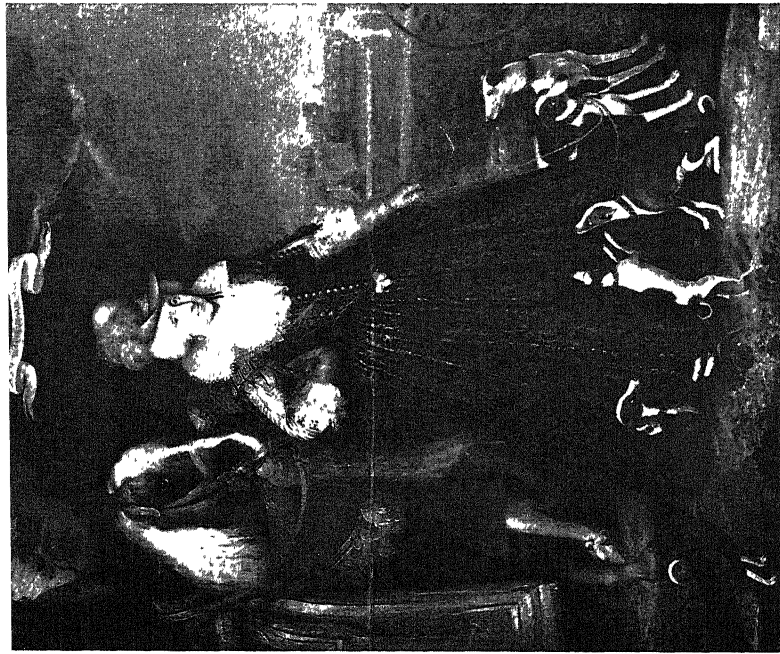
*Hampton Court*

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13 Edward VI

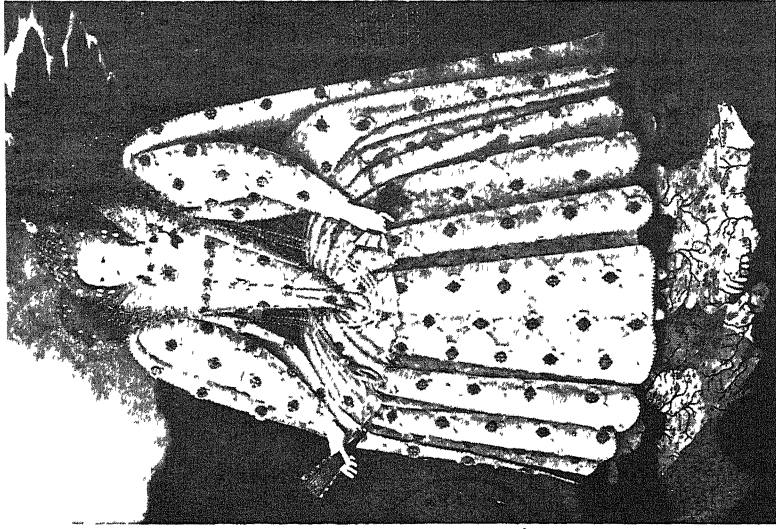
*Hampton Court*



14 Anne of Denmark

*Hampton Court*

*Reproduced by gracious permission of H.M. The King*



15 Queen Elizabeth standing upon the  
Map of England

*National Portrait Gallery*



married a granddaughter of the last Duke of Exeter, a Holland. But it's all quite uncertain. What do you think of the 'Man with the Petrarch'?"

This picture is attributed to Jean Clouet, father of the more famous François. Although this miraculous little panel is an exactly contemporary court portrait of a man in a black cap on a blue ground, it seems separated from Reskymer by a vast distance. Technically there is some superficial similarity, though the Clouet, deriving more directly from the fifteenth-century school of illuminated portrait miniatures, has not the polished, enamel quality of the Holbein. But it is temperamentally that they seem to me farthest apart. Between them gapes all the width that separated the French from the English court. This spiritual difference is especially evident in the contrast of the faces in the Holbein drawings at Windsor and those of the numerous volumes of Clouetesque sketches of the French nobility under François I and Henri II scattered about France to-day (the game of putting names to these heads being a French forerunner of our after-dinner paper-games). After the deaths of Wolsey and Catherine of Aragon, the English aristocracy became, I think, ever more isolated from the general current of European things. Save for the brief brilliant interlude of Thomas Cromwell, that sixteenth-century Disraeli who was so much too foreign for the ruling classes to stomach, the Tudor court lost what cosmopolitanism of outlook it had ever had. The subtle sophistication of Paris and the châteaux of the Loire had no counterpart in England. The Howards, the Seymours, and the Cecils could have no real sympathy with the artificial sentimentality, the heartless *joyeuseté* of a court wholly under the influence of Brantome and Ronsard. The English aristocracy was heartless, too, in its own hard way, but it was the materialistic heartlessness of land-grabbers. This fundamental rift (which Mary Tudor's short Spanish reign did nothing to bridge) was already apparent in the 'thirties, and the seeds sowing then were to flower dramatically later in the century in the tragic, inevitable antipathy of

Elizabeth and Mary Queen of Scots. It is easy to enlarge ceaselessly on the contrasts of temperament and upbringing presented by these two queens—the one magnificent, practical, swearing loud, manly oaths, the other sensitive, unscrupulous, and deeply feminine, bred by the Guises and gay with the glittering gaiety of their world. But the difference comes out most concisely in their letters, and in the things each wrote privately for herself alone. As a young woman Elizabeth would spin from her mind and copy out in her fine court hand those tortuous English prayers to God the Father, some of which may still be read to-day. But across the channel Mary Stuart was writing consciously delicate laments, which had possibly little to do with realities and in spite of her intense religious instincts, had nothing at all to do with God:

Qui en mon doux printemps  
Et fleur de ma jeunesse  
Toutes le peines sens  
D'une extreme tristesse  
Et en rien n'ay plaisir  
Qu'en regret et dêsir?

. . . . .

Ce qui m'estoit plaisant  
Ores m'est peine dure:  
Le jour le plus luisant  
M'est nuit et obscure  
Et n'est rien si exquis  
Qui de nisi soit requis.

I tried to explain some of what I was thinking to Perdita. Her quick brain seized on a weakness at once.

"But you've just been telling me," she said, "that Holbein understood Reskymer so well because he wasn't a typical English court vulgarian?"

"Quite," I said, trying hard to sound self-confident, and to conceal the weakness I invariably feel when any statement of mine is questioned. "Quite, but all the same he wasn't French, was he, for all the affinities between Brittany and Cornwall."

"Oh, are there affinities? Tell me about them."

And the conversation slid comfortably off on to St. Michael's Mount and Mont St. Michel, and the sort of scrappy information about Celts and short skulls which one used to pick up in the introduction to school editions of the *Agricola*. Going on round the room we looked quickly at the surprising silken "*Noli Me Tangere*" (the surest proof to my mind, of Holbein's disputed Italian tour) and the rest of the pictures, before wandering on through the great Wren saloons. Perdita begged to be allowed to look at the Tintoretos, the Lottos, and the Bassani on the walls.

"Look, by all means," I said genially, "but don't take too long because we've so much more to see. And don't expect me to discuss them with you, because I'm shamefully ignorant. You can come here any day you like with somebody competent to talk Italian art with you. As for me, you know I'm more or less half-educated, hating music and with not the faintest inkling about Italian pictures. So you'd much better hurry along and see those gawky Mytenses (I don't think them that, I adore them) instead."

Presently we came to the lovely fantastic picture of Lady Arabella Stuart, in a white dress embroidered with violas, and shoes of bright periwinkle blue. She stands beneath a fig-tree, a conical cap on her head, wreathing a chaplet of violas about the antlers of a stag beside her. A tablet with some verses, beginning, "The restless swallow fits my restless mind," lies in a grassy corner:

With pensive thoughts my weeping stag I crowne  
Whose melancholy tears my cares expresse;  
Hes tears in sylence, and my sighes unknowne  
Are all the physicke that my harmes redresse.

For me this picture epitomizes the spirit of the Jacobean transition. I have always felt that spiritually the age of James I began some twelve years before Queen Elizabeth's death. The strange inconsequent clothes that were coming in, gauzy and spangled, the hooped skirts stopping well above the ankle, are symptomatic of the change. There

was nothing very Tudor about the casual fantasy of late Elizabethan court life. It was the new age of Inigo Jones and Anne of Denmark. This particular picture probably shows the ill-fated Arabella (if, indeed, it be she) dressed for one of those masques with which James I's queen, intelligently ignoring her husband's unfortunate tastes, would wile away her time. Anne of Denmark's life was almost wholly occupied by theatricals. She continued and expanded the traditional Tudor revels at Christmas, Twelfth Night, and New Year, seizing every opportunity for producing a masque.

There are two portraits of her at Hampton Court. One is a rather uninteresting full-length, standing in a room with a lattice window, a pair to a similar picture of James I. The other, by Paul Van Somer, is an amusing, lively picture of the Queen, wearing a kind of riding habit and a tall-crowned felt hat, on foot in a landscape amid dogs and neighing horses. Perdita had not cared for either of them ("Anne of Denmark's pretty dreary, anyway," she said), but she was fascinated by Arabella Stuart.

"What a perfect blue," she said. "Now, why can't I get something like that to-day?"

"Because it's too vivid for modern life," I answered.

"Really, you're getting exactly like poor old Belloc. And you can't go on the way you do about the "*shrillness*" of modern life and then say a colour's too vivid for it. Be consistent at least. But what a sublime picture! The flowers on the antlers are the finishing touch."

"Yes, aren't they. You know Queen Elizabeth had a favourite collection of antlers. She got them from all over the Continent. Essex brought some antlers of the giant elk back for her from the Irish bogs. They're still here in the palace, stuck along the walls of the Haunted Gallery."

"Oh, do let's see them quickly. But why haven't we found anything of Elizabeth yet?"

"We shall do," I replied, "if you hurry."

Like Anne of Denmark, Elizabeth is represented more than once at Hampton Court to-day. There is the stiff

black and silver portrait, pointlessly attributed to Gheeraerts, showing her in middle age with a prominent nose and a red wig. And then there is the picture of her as an elegant young queen, stepping gaily from a pavilion towards a group of three welcoming Renaissance goddesses. It is by Hans Eworth, and a typical imitation of the Fontainebleau school, Primaticcio and his followers seen through Flemish eyes. Two attendants stand behind the queen in the archway, one of them possibly the Duchess of Suffolk, mother of Lady Jane Grey.

Elizabeth came frequently to Hampton Court. Continuing Henry VIII's improvements to the palace, she built stables and coach-houses, and enlarged the gardens. It was here that in 1562 the whispered scandal of a royal bastard broke upon a not altogether unexpectant court. There had long been rumours that Leicester's attachment to the Queen was more than platonic. For some months past the French ambassador and Mary Queen of Scots were mischievously busy retailing meretricious snippets of gossip about Elizabeth's behaviour for the benefit of that sinister Italian figure, the Queen-Mother in Paris and her tittering French courtiers. Even the country people in England had begun to talk of it. In September her enemies thought the Queen's condition quite painfully obvious, and the famous tennis-court row between Leicester and the Duke of Norfolk added fuel to the fire. Leicester, hot after the game, had snatched the Queen's handkerchief out of her hand, as she sat watching the play, and Norfolk with abrupt chivalry had tried to hit Lord Robert in the face with his tennis-racket. It had all been most unfortunate, and to many people Leicester's familiarity was highly indicative. The French court were told how he was said to have kissed the Queen's nightgown one morning in her bedchamber, a room, anyway, in which he was thought to be all too welcome. But in the middle of October Elizabeth fell ill of the smallpox, and was given up for lost. The Council bustled about the corridors of the palace, discussing the awkward question of the succession. Even the Queen

thought herself as good as dead. Summoning Leicester to her death-bed, she muttered that "nothing unseemly had ever passed between them," recommended him as Protector of the realm, and then recovered swiftly in a few days.

How near Leicester really got to a prince consort's crown will always be a mystery. His own inept boasts of his influence, and the disturbingly opportune way in which his wife, Amy Robsart, tumbled down the staircase at Cumnor Hall, to be found next morning, lying at the bottom with a broken neck, probably prevented the marriage quite as much as its general unpopularity. It seemed as though the old rivalry between Seymour and Dudley, which had begun almost with the century itself, might be finished by a complete Dudley triumph, but it was not to be. Leicester retained Elizabeth's favour for the remainder of his life, even his marriage with the Countess of Essex, and his questionable negotiations for a Flemish throne in the 'eighties being powerless to shake it. In the year of the Armada he caught a cold and died, predeceasing by a few months his brother the Earl of Warwick, who was being slowly killed by gangrene. But at Hampton Court in the 'sixties "Lord Robert" was still very much beloved. There is about Elizabeth's feelings for him a pathos almost as great as that of her later fondness for Essex. Sir James Melville, the Scottish envoy, rather pertly reports on the touching contents of a private cabinet in the Queen's bedchamber. Inviting him into this room one day during his official stay at Hampton Court, and giving him a candle to hold, Elizabeth opened a private cabinet, in the drawer of which lay a number of miniatures wrapped in pieces of paper, and labelled with her own hand. She must evidently have intended to show him the picture of Mary Queen of Scots, which she subsequently did, kissing it with improbable affection as she put it back in the drawer. But before she could perform this gracious gesture, the importunate envoy had cajoled her into letting him open a packet on which were the words, "My Lord's Picture": it was a miniature of Leicester.

In spite of the prying eyes with which he watched her,

Melville, like every other ambassador who came to her court, had a deep admiration for this able and fantastic queen. He has left curiously vivid pictures of her walking in the garden at Hampton Court at eight o'clock in the morning, or playing the virginals in a deserted gallery of the palace, jumping up when he came suddenly upon her, because she "played not before men, but when she was solitary to shun melancholy." Melancholy was a marked characteristic of her family, the necessary concomitant, perhaps, of their gusty, intelligent minds. Henry VIII at the end of his life, liked to sit peacefully at a table, tired of shovel-board and backgammon, strumming to himself on his lute. Elizabeth had inherited her father's passion for music and dancing. As she told another ambassador, four years before her death, she had once been called "the Florentine" because she had been thought accomplished at these arts, "but," she added, "she had never been that." All the same, she said, she liked to have a pavanne played, and in her youth she had learnt to dance high as the Italians did, but now she was nothing but a foolish old woman. She would sit there in her old age in one of the rooms of the palace, gorgeously dressed, directing the maids of honour in their numbers and tapping out the cadences with her foot. Years before there had once been criticism of her dancing, the headstrong young Earl of Oxford, that unsuitable son-in-law of the wily Burleigh, declaring by God that the Queen was the worst dancer in the kingdom. A few weeks later he had found himself in the Tower.

Elizabeth was gracious and a little coy with visiting envoys, receiving de Noailles on a couch (she hastened to explain that she had just had an accident in her coach), sitting "down low on a cushion" for Melville, and offering him one for his knees. It was another Scot, Lord Sempill of Beltreis, who has left us the unforgettable glimpse of the aged, lonely queen during her last visit to Hampton Court in 1599 (when she upset Lord Hunsdon so by "making shift" with Lady Scudamore's lodging for her presence chamber). Sempill, looking in through a window saw Elizabeth

"dancing the Spanish panic to a whistle and a taboureur, none being with her but my Lady Warwick." It was the melancholy and the solitariness again, and perhaps the lonely dancing, evoked memories of happier, younger days. Elizabeth's great contemporary, St. Theresa of Avila, also found solitary dancing a solace. By temperament intensely melancholic, this remarkable woman would force herself each day of her life to dance and play on a musical instrument before her admiring nuns.

We know how Elizabeth looked at about this time from the fine arrogant portrait of her, now in the National Portrait Gallery, standing in a wide white farthingale, a fan in her right hand, upon the map of England. The face is hollow and the cheekbones have become prominent with age, the nose is more thinly bony and hooked, but apart from these inevitable changes, it is still easily recognizable as that of the girl with her red-gold hair down her back, and the heavy regal crown on her head, in the panel at Warwick Castle and the miniature at Welbeck Abbey. Throughout the whole series of Elizabeth's innumerable portraits, certain features remain constant—the narrow face, the heavy, hooded eyelids, the shrewd, proud eyes, and the long, exquisite hands. The gradual change of her clothes, from the small, tight ruff and high bodices of the earlier pictures (the Cobham portrait, and the Hilliard miniature of 1572, with the mourning ring for St. Bartholomew), to the open, bedizened lace collar, held up by wire and the jewelled wig of the later. It seems fairly certain that she lost most of her hair in the smallpox attack of 1562, when she was only twenty-eight, and ever after she wore a dark red wig. As the years went by, the jewels and favours stuck on her wigs became more elaborate. De Maise, describing her appearance with some hostility in 1599, paints her as a grotesque, not to say ludicrous figure, in a nightgown of silver and crimson cloth, split open to her belly, her head crowned by a high red wig hung with pearls (bad pearls, he noted, with a Frenchman's contempt for the valueless), two curling locks of false hair falling down



on either side of her face. In a picture in the gallery in Siena painted rather more fluently than most, she is shown dressed in black, with a transparent stiff grey cloak about her, a colander in her hand, and the same knotted pearls as in the Cobham picture. Behind her is a curtain and a globe, and above to the right a colonnaded interior, where court gentlemen (one of them possibly Sir Christopher Hatton) strut and swagger. Behind her in the National Portrait Gallery full-length, there are no little figures, and no life of any sort; only a threatening blackish sky, streaked by lightning flashes, and dark with the gathering clouds of a storm.

As she left Hampton Court for the last time, a real storm was raging, but the Queen insisted on riding out into it. She had never minded about the weather—Sir Thomas Smith had found her early one morning at Hampton, making haste “to go walking with her ladies, because it was a frost”—and to Lord Hunsdon who ventured to remonstrate that “it was not meet for one of Her Majesty’s years to go riding in such a storm,” she angrily retorted: “My years! Maids to your horses quickly,” and did not speak to her cousin for two days. As she passed through Kingston in the rain on her way to Nonesuch an old man blessed her, wishing she might live a hundred years. Lord Sempill, noting the pleasure this benediction gave her with evident surprise, commented maliciously that he took this “to be the cause that some preachers pray she may last as the sun and the moon.” But the prayers went unanswered and the glorious Elizabethan reign was drawing inexorably to its close. The tone of the crude popular ballads were ever more triumphant: *Ring out Ye Bells*, a broadsheet celebrating the forty-second anniversary of the Queen’s succession, is a fair example:

Her stately bowers  
Her castles and towers  
She hath kept them up every one;  
That none doe decay  
but stand goodly and gay  
Repayred with lime and stone . . .

The Muscovite,  
 With many a knight,  
 The Swesians and Denmarke king  
 To her good grace  
 Send hither apace  
 For many a needful thing.

The Scots can tell,  
 The Spaniards know well,  
 The Frenchman cannot deny  
 But her good grace  
 Toward every place  
 Doth carry a gracious eye.

But for the old Queen there can have been small comfort in such boisterous Gilbert and Sullivan sentiments. The days when she could review her troops at Tilbury on the famous white horse were gone for ever. She was tired and disillusioned, and she got an unknown painter (possibly Marc Gheeraerts) to make a portrait of her in ermine-edged black velvet, with pearls about her neck, sitting upright in a great red chair, her head wearily in her hand and the menacing figures of Death and Time at her back. In her left hand is a prayer-book, above her head float two cupids bearing a royal crown, but the most significant thing in the whole melancholy picture is the hour-glass which Death holds just behind her shoulder.

. . . . .

It was getting late by the time we had walked through the main rooms, and come to the Haunted Gallery, where Elizabeth's collection of stags' antlers adorns the wall. These dusty horns are some of the few personal relics she has left behind her. I saw once, in a gloomy Victorian country house in Yorkshire, two objects said to have belonged to Queen Elizabeth, and which may well have come from Hampton Court. One was a solid, angular cabinet, made of ebony and faced with tarnished looking-glass, a sparkling ugly piece of furniture, typical of English Renaissance taste. In a drawer of this cabinet was kept the other more intimate relic—a flat metal ornament for a stomacher, set with bright,

semi-precious stones and having, rather oddly, a profile of the Queen lightly engraved on the reverse. It was a large, unlikely jewel, and though it may not have been worn by the Queen herself, it is possible that it was given by her to some lady-in-waiting. It had none of the fine workmanship of the Armada jewel, but I have seldom seen anything I wished to acquire more. Being a sentimentalist I have a passion for relics of every kind, and especially for signatures. Over the desk at which I am writing hangs the signature, dated April 1559, of Anthony Foster, the friend of Leicester, and who played a mysterious, inexplicable part in the fate of Amy Robsart at Cumnor Hall. I found the signature in a shop in the High at Oxford, lying on the floor amid a heap of decaying Bibles. So the antlers in the Haunted Gallery appeal to me immensely, and Perdita liked them too. The Gallery takes its name from the legend of the shrieking phantom of Catherine Howard, said to rush distractedly down it to the door of the royal chapel in the watches of the night. Between the antlers now hang a number of full-lengths of the Danish and German connections of Anne of Denmark, fair, turnip-faced people in tight court clothes of white and gold satin.

From the Haunted Gallery we hurried on through the Great Hall, that superb achievement of Tudor architecture, where Henry VIII, endeavouring to stem the tide of informality that was overtaking his court, ordered the royal household to dine nightly at long public tables in the old traditional way. Perdita was anxious to see the Mantegnas, and we wanted to get back to London before it got chilly. In spite of the sultriness of the afternoon, it was almost cold as we walked briskly along the gravel to the Orangery. The shadows were lengthening across the parterre and the high windows of Wolsey's apartments, as we passed beneath them, seemed black and empty holes in the dull-red brick of the wall.

### III

## DULWICH

THE road to Dulwich Gallery from the railway station, along which Perdita and I were walking, is, I imagine, one of the most countrified in the London suburbs. On the whole I do not like the suburbs at all. This is not for any snobbish reason, but because I dislike compromise, particularly with Nature. I like the city, and I like the country: I do not like the grey-green ring where they merge. Before the Industrial Age there can have been none of this urban uncertainty. The towns began where the country ended, and their outline was not blurred by brick villas and rose-gardens. In seventeenth-century England you came suddenly upon a town, much as you still may, I believe, in parts of Ireland to-day, or in those hidden, unprogressive pastoral districts of central France, along the valley of the Vienne in the Charente, for example, or farther east in the Pûys de Dome. But West Dulwich is, for me, an exception in suburbs. I do not agree with the diarist Evelyn, who, coming out to see the college in 1675, found it "very ill-contrived" and situated "in a melancholy part of Camberwell parish." To-day West Dulwich retains a faded, rural character, with its quiet roads lined with plane-trees, running lane-like between hedges of whitethorn. There is about it all an attractive keepsake air. The houses for the most part are not new, and the creeper which covers their porches has crept, one feels, for well over a hundred years. An old gentleman, a local resident, with whom Perdita and I had struck up a momentary acquaintanceship in the train, had told us about the birds at Dulwich, how larks and even nightingales, ordinarily contemptuous enough of the environs of London, could at times be heard singing here in the lime-trees. Behind us as we walked rose the Surrey hills, with the ruined towers of the Crystal Palace on their

summit, and before us lay Peckham, with Herne Hill a forest of chimney-stacks. The preservation of this side of Dulwich from a similar fate is no doubt due to the college and its grounds.

It was towards the pleasant vale of Dulwich that one September day in 1619 a number of ornate, rectangular Jacobean coaches could have been seen rumbling and jolting their uneasy way. They were bringing a distinguished company of Jacobean notables, gathering there to witness the opening of the college. Inigo Jones was amongst them, and the Lord Chancellor, Sir Francis Bacon, with his tall black hat and his staff, come to watch with that "delicate lively hazel eye, like the eye of a viper," the inauguration of the College of God's Gift. The college was, in fact, the gift of Edward Alleyn, the foremost actor of the last reign. "Proteus for shapes and Roscius for a tongue," Heywood had called him, and though he had retired in the year after James I's succession, Alleyn kept for the rest of his life a stage reputation fully as potent as that of Charles Kemble or Irving in a later day. He had played the hero in Marlowe's tragedies, *Tamburlaine the Great*, *Dr. Faustus*, and Barabas in *The Jew of Malta*. His first wife was a daughter of Philip Henslowe, whose partner in theatrical enterprises he became, obtaining an interest in the bear-baiting house in Paris Garden, and building the Fortune Theatre, Cripple-gate. He had become head of the Lord Admiral's company of players and then sole proprietor of the popular pleasure-resorts on the Bankside, the Rose Theatre and the rest. In this way he had accumulated considerable wealth and consequently a certain standing. He could afford to be the patron of playwrights and poets, of Dekker, for instance, and of John Taylor the Water Poet, whose originality so gratified the Jacobean world. Four years after the opening of Dulwich College, Alleyn, left a widower, cemented his literary connections by a marriage with Constance Donne, a daughter of the Dean of St. Paul's. Wishing to found a college for poor scholars (both "towne" and "foreign") he had bought the estate of Dulwich in 1605. Dulwich had originally been

one of the manors of the Cluniac monks of Bermondsey, but since the Reformation it had passed through many hands. Alleyn had it from Sir Francis Calton, but the whole ground, with its three-mile stretch between the two hill ranges, he did not get till 1614.

In a limited way it was Alleyn who founded the picture-gallery, to which Perdita and I were now bound. That is to say, that he gave at various times a number of pictures to the college, of which twenty-eight remain to-day. His art purchases were haphazard and a little conventional, a complete set of the kings and queens of England, a dozen heads of the Sybils. "I chaynged," he noted in his diary in November 1620, "my 12 owld Sybls for 12 newe and gave 40d a pece to boot to Mr. Gibbkin." These entries, and others like them, imply a lack of aesthetic interest, and suggest that the English monarchs and the oracles of the ancients were intended for use in the instruction of the scholars, much as I remember were Medici prints and postcards at my private school. An acquisition of greater historical interest, made in 1618, were the painted panels from the upper part of Queen Elizabeth's State barge. These, now in the college library, but originally placed in the Great Chamber or Audit Room, were made into a mantelpiece by "goodman Gardyner" and his joiners at a total cost of £5 18s. 11d. It was sentiment, probably, that inspired Alleyn to pay for these relics. In the years spent amid the teeming activity of the Bankside, he must often have seen the great gilt barge, with its gorgeously liveried oarsmen and the pennoned canopy of velvet with the royal cypher upon it, plying up and down the river between Westminster and the palaces at Richmond and Hampton Court. The Queen would be lying back, perhaps, among the cushions, with Lord Robert or some honoured foreign visitor, an ambassador or that "French imp" the Duc d'Anjou, at her side. The oars plashing rhythmically in the water, and the sunlight glittering on the prow, the huge, unwieldy State barge would pass slowly up the Thames, bearing its precious burden of Tudor royalty, while the people acclaimed it from the banks.

It is no wonder that when Alleyn discovered, late in the reign of James I, that they were selling up the Queen's barge piecemeal, the memories of his youth and an abiding loyalty to the glories of the reign that was past should make him buy some of it to incorporate in his fine new college. The panels, which are still in the mantelpiece, show Piety, in a yellow drapery with a white wimple, and Liberality, that Renaissance virtue, in green, with a cornucopia in either hand.

The day we had chosen for Dulwich turned out to be even hotter than the day on which we had gone to Hampton Court. There were little pools of heat on the tarmac, and the July sun dappled the leaves of the chestnut-trees and made piebald patches on the path. By a miracle I had not got hay fever that day, and so I could enjoy the sweet, unusual smell of the warm grass and the faint, iridescent chestnut blooms. There is an ample solidity about a chestnut-tree in flower that I particularly like, its full, billowing shape and its rotundity, and the thick bright green of the leaves. Daisies and dandelions were poking up through the dusty grass in the hedgerows. Everywhere was the still plenitude of summer, so much more satisfying, I think, than the urgency of spring.

"Actually I like the autumn best of all, don't you?" I said to Perdita as we turned a corner in the road, "the melancholy of it and the colour of the trees. I'm hoping death will be like that," I continued morbidly, "mellow and slightly sad; I'd hate to die joyfully like the saints."

"But the saints couldn't help it, could they," she answered, "the joy, I mean; St. Perpetua's vision of the brazen ladder, for instance, would naturally make one rather pleased."

"But would you like to die with a globe of phosphorescent light whirling round over your body, like St. John of the Cross? I should be terrified."

"So should I," she said, "but the truth is, you know, that we don't want to die at all. I don't, at any rate. But about autumn, they say that you only adore it while you're young. The older you get the more important spring and summer seem, till you love them with an almost indecent intensity.

And then autumn becomes just damp and blighting. But I don't know. I don't think I'll ever get tired of autumn, will you?"

"Never," I said emphatically, "I love it more than I can possibly say."

This was a literal statement. My passion for autumn is as deeply rooted as my passion for crypts. I suspect that both are part and parcel of what in Chaucer's time would have been classed as the "Melancholicke" temperament. I have often thought that if I were rich (I have long given up saying "when") I would chase autumn round the world, as one is told that dyspeptic millionaires pursue the summer sun. Like many people, I have spent autumn in a number of countries, but except for Massachusetts and Connecticut, it is in England that I like it best. If each country has its own season, the autumn is the English one. The French countryside is, in my plan, for the summer—the wide sweep of the ripe cornfields, sprinkled with scarlet poppies and thyme and scented herbs, the baking earth and the crickets singing, the poplar-trees casting formal bars of shade, and the warm ochre walls of a turreted farm-house with emerald lizards whisking in and out of the cracks. The Lake of Geneva, I discovered when we lived there all one year round, properly belongs to the spring. I remember how I used to scramble up and down the steep slopes behind Chillon, hunting for the speckled fritillary flowers and wondering when the pale narcissus buds would begin to open on the hard, green ground. I was then in the first fine rapture of discovering Housman, whom I have never wholly deserted since. I do not share his embittered stoical outlook, but reading him still makes me sometimes want to cry. Better than any other English poet of his generation, he caught what James Thomson for all his pains so signally missed, the spirit of the seasons. As I wandered about the tracks leading up to Caux and Glion, and the heights above them where one hoped the gentians grew, I would chant to myself Housman's *Lenten Lily*, piping it out to the strong Swiss air and the unbroken silence of the pine-woods:



And there's the windflower chilly,  
With all the winds at play,  
And there's the Lenten Lily  
That has not long to stay  
And dies on Easter day.

Spring in England, though it has evident beauties (which Browning for one appreciated better than I), does not move me like the subtle melancholy of October. At school, I looked forward to the Somerset autumn, which meant for me purplish wild orchids in a larch-wood I knew of, blackberries rich on the hedges, and the streams all choked with fallen leaves. In the North of England, on the Tees, where we lived for four years, autumn was shorter and more sombre, bleak, sharp winds blowing off the moors and the coppices prematurely bare. Oxford in the Michaelmas term, when it is not raining, can give one autumn at its best. The trees in the college quadrangles shed their leaves mournfully, slowly, dropping them one by one. The narrow, mossy paths of Addison's Walk behind Magdalen are crisp under one's feet, with the cracking of twigs and the rustling of the dry leaves, swept into neat piles by the gardener's brush, beneath the tall grey elms. Then, too, you can walk over to Boars Hill, your breath making funnels of vapour in the cold transparency of the air, or you can go, trespassing, through Wytham Woods, or along the towpath to Iffley. Best of all, I liked to go across the level tranquillity of Port Meadow, broad and golden, with the steady flowing river ranked by trees, cows and riding figures in the distance, like a Hobbema landscape; to eastward the ruined walls of Godstow nunnery (where Rosamund Clifford, Henry II's mistress, is reputed to lie buried) with their broken Gothic arches standing thinly up against the high October sky. But always I think that London in the autumn is surpassed by none of these. The trees in the Mall turning russet, the white mists gathering low over the Serpentine, the Strand at its most mysterious at six o'clock of an October evening, and the river which, seen from the Temple garden, looks remote and inky dark. They shift smoothly and for ever, the worlds

within worlds that the city of London contains, changing with the seasons and the hours of the day, the light altering continually on the façades of the buildings and the faces of the streets. It is all so strange and lovely, and so near to hand. Dulwich I have not yet seen in the autumn, but I surmise that midsummer, or a Christmas-card winter with holly-berries and cock-robins, are needed to give it its rightful air.



The Dulwich Gallery:  
An engraving from *The Designs of Sir John Soane*

The inside of the gallery, which we had now reached, has the same early nineteenth-century flavour as West Dulwich itself. The vista of five rooms that faces one at the entrance (with Mrs. Siddons as the Tragic Muse at the end of it) is much like an interior in a Baxter colour-print, or a sketch in a young lady's album. The doorways are arched, the walls painted a deep Pompeian red, and a brass handrail follows them round. The pictures are hung well up, one above the other, in an economical way. There are cane chairs for one to sit on, and it is all eminently clean and quiet. This pleasing out-of-date atmosphere is the more surprising that several of the rooms now full of pictures are quite modern, and formed no part of Sir John Soane's original design. When the gallery was completed in July 1811, the five rooms in a chain through which we were looking, and the small mausoleum to the west, were all that was intended for the public view. I had meant to tell Perdita about the history of the gallery as we came along, but other conversation and a fear of seeming didactic had

prevented me. As a matter of fact the history of Dulwich gallery seems to me one of the most intriguing stories connected with any London building. The present form and contents of the gallery are the direct result of Catherine the Great's partition of Poland.

It was not that Catherine the Great founded the gallery. The immediate benefactor was Sir Francis Bourgeois, the son of a Swiss watchmaker living in St. Martin's Lane. Bourgeois had been a pupil of de Louthembourg, and later a painter of landscapes and battle-pieces, a Royal Academician, and finally in 1794 official landscapist to George III. Several of his pictures are now in the gallery—academic compositions with solemn titles: *Religion in the Desert*, *A Family at a Grave*, *The Sacrifice of Iphigenia*, *Tiger Hunt*. Before his English court appointment Bourgeois had been for three years official painter to Stanislaus Poniatowski, the King of Poland, who had conferred a knighthood on him. His connection with Stanislaus was probably due to his close friendship with Noel Desenfans, a connoisseur of foreign birth who had lived most of his life in England. Desenfans was a Frenchman of good family. He had started as a teacher of languages in London, and married an heiress, Margaret Morris. He had then settled down to the leisurely, lucrative existence of an eighteenth-century picture dealer. From all accounts he must have been one of the most charming and delightful of men. His official position in London was that of Consul-General to the King of Poland, his actual business being to collect pictures for a projected gallery in Warsaw. Stanislaus Poniatowski, a dark and personable ex-lover of the Russian Empress, setting such store by his hair that he would not have it shaved off for the traditional anointing at his coronation, had been propped up on the elective throne of Poland by Catherine II. Later, she had no compunction in removing this regal lay-figure, or rather, in bringing about his abdication by the partition of his kingdom. Stanislaus was fond of pictures ("à présent mon bonheur n'est plus qu'en peinture," he wrote once to his English consul not long before his abdication); he was

also, apparently, attached to M. Desenfans. He had been introduced to him by his brother Michael Poniatowski, Primate of Poland, who knew Desenfans well. In the gallery is a pastel of King Stanislaus by Kucharski, standing in a red coat with his hair in powder. This would seem to be the portrait he sent to Desenfans after he had given up the Polish throne: "since I cannot converse with you in person," he wrote affectionately, "my portrait may now and then make you think of Stanislaus Augustus Rex." The affection may in part have been diplomatic or conciliatory, for with the king's retirement to Petersburg as a Russian pensioner, the collection formed by Desenfans lost its *raison d'être*. Desenfans and his Paris partner, the husband of Mme Vigée le Brun, were left with some four hundred and twenty paintings on their hands. After a fruitless appeal to the Emperor Paul, by way of Lord Whitworth, the ambassador at the imperial court, to pay the Polish king's debts, Desenfans decided to exhibit and sell off the pictures. For some reason he had bad luck about sales. In 1785 he had arranged for a large one at Christie's, which had been a total failure. This disappointment M. Desenfans attributed merrily to an "aerial excursion" which had taken place on the day fixed for his sale. This must have been the ascent of Lunardi's balloon from the London artillery ground. It was but three years since the first untethered fire-balloon to carry a human being off the earth had risen gently from the grounds of the Château de la Muette in the Bois at Paris, to be wafted above the Invalides and the École Militaire for a full twenty minutes, sinking triumphantly to rest beyond the Boulevards. Lunardi, who was secretary to the Neapolitan ambassador, Prince Caramanico, was the first balloonist to attract London attention. His balloon was exhibited for some days at the Lyceum in the Strand, and then on September 15th, 1784, it was inflated with hydrogen gas and the inventor, forced by the impatience of the crowd to leave his companion, Mr. Biggin, on the ground, sailed bravely up into the air alone. With him in the basket he had a dog, a cat, and a pigeon, also a pair of oars to facilitate descent. One

of the oars got broken, the pigeon escaped, and Lunardi was obliged to land at South Mimms in Hertfordshire, after an hour and a half's flight, to release the cat which was suffering from the cold. He rose again, however, and came down three-quarters of an hour later, to the terror of the country people, at Standon, near Ware. The Prince Regent and many of the quality had been enraptured spectators of this ascent, and it is easy to see that a picture sale at Christie's was but a humdrum counter-attraction to this fascinating novelty. The next year Desenfans held another, more successful, sale, and in 1799 launched his plan for the foundation of a National Gallery, to which he offered to contribute money and pictures. The Government, however, turned it down. He then organized an exhibition in Berners Street of the pictures bought for King Stanislaus. This was in 1802. The catalogue Desenfans prepared was evidently felt to be a masterpiece of its kind, and one of his friends paid the work a charming tribute in verse:

Though tasteless Time, with slow but certain rage,  
 Painting's sublimest treasures will destroy,  
 Yet those preserved in thy descriptive page,  
 Uninjur'd shall Posterity enjoy.  
 So well thy pen each Master's style displays,  
 Such force and beauty in the work we find,  
 That Fancy charm'd o'er every picture strays  
 And feels the rich collection in the mind.

Nearly fifty of these pictures are now in the gallery. Although in bad health, M. Desenfans continued to live very happily in his house at Charlotte Street, Portland Place, entertaining his friends with "elegance and even splendour" in a dining-room hung about with thirteen Poussins. Towards the end of his life he went out little, relying on the more *mondain* Sir Francis Bourgeois to bring him the news of the town. When he died in 1807 he left all his possessions to his widow and to Sir Francis Bourgeois, desiring them to live together in his house, with the odd proviso that his own body, in a leaden coffin, should be kept in a vault to be built near by. Bourgeois and Mrs. Desenfans set about implementing the

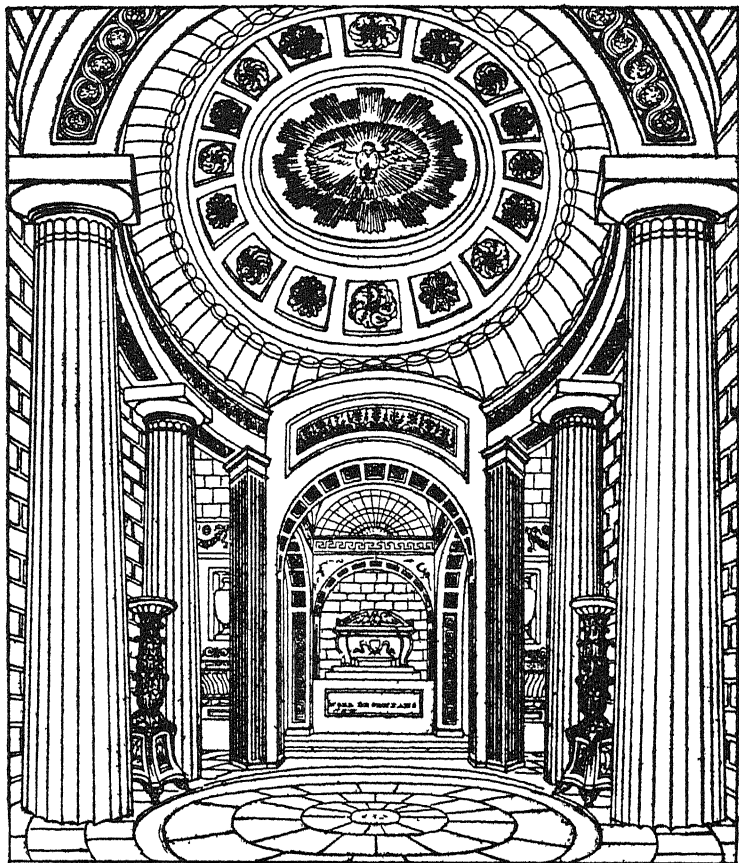
dead man's wishes about his pictures by making valiant efforts to give them to the public. About this there was a great deal of difficulty. A laconic reply from Welbeck, couched in barely courteous terms, brought the ducal refusal to Bourgeois's rather nervously worded request to buy the Charlotte Street house from the Portland Estate and make it into a museum. The Duke of Portland, to make it quite clear that he disapproved of Polish titles as much as of public galleries, addressed his letter to Francis Bourgeois, Esq., notwithstanding George III's specially granted recognition of the right to use King Stanislaus's knighthood.

A portrait by Beechey of Sir Francis wearing his insignia, together with some copies of it by himself, are at Dulwich to-day. The medal and ribbon shown in these pictures are now displayed in a glass case in the gallery.

After this blunt rebuff, Sir Francis's thoughts evidently turned to the actors' college at Dulwich. He had many connections with the stage, beginning with de Louthembourg who had been artistic adviser to Drury Lane. The Master and Fellows at Dulwich were only too amenable, and Sir Francis drew up a will leaving them all the pictures and a large sum of money, thus, it was later said, depriving a starving niece of her lawful expectations. He died some time before Mrs. Desenfans, who had him lapped in lead and kept beside her husband in the Charlotte Street vault. It was at her expense that Sir John Soane was commissioned to erect the present picture-gallery, and when she died, as it was nearing completion, she left the college some more money and her favourite pieces of Buhl. Before her death, however, she had decided to have her own body, together with those of her husband and Sir Francis Bourgeois, placed in a mausoleum adjacent to the gallery. Perdita and I peeped through the locked gates of the small circular building, scrupulously white within, and lit by an octagonal lantern on the summit of the roof. A sort of honeyed daylight filters through this lantern, the panes of which are made of amber-coloured glass. In this burial-chamber lie three massive porphyry sarcophagi, holding the bodies of

the founders of the gallery, as inseparable in death as they were in life.

"I wish they hadn't done that," said Perdita, "been buried here, I mean; it casts such a gloom, doesn't it?"



The Interior of the Mausoleum at Dulwich:  
An engraving from *The Designs of Sir John Soane*

"In a way it does, I suppose," I answered.

"Of course it does, and anyway it's all much too still and white to be comfortable."

Perdita, as I had guessed at St. Paul's, does not care for the proximity of sarcophagi; myself I do not mind it at all.

"You ought to try to get a better attitude about these things," I said, "like these people, for instance." I pointed to a small panel dated 1560 which hangs in the narrow crowded gallery leading from the mausoleum to one of the front rooms.

"Whatever is it?" she asked.

It was the sort of picture of which I am really fond, an early Elizabethan emblem painting of a husband and wife standing on either side of a tomb, their hands resting on a large skull, and a half-shrouded corpse stretched out on a table in front of them. Behind them is a ledge with a lighted candle upon it, and two small wool-packs between two brass pots of flowers, with a wall inscription, "*Thus consume the ovr tyme.*" Shields of arms are suspended in the upper corners of the picture and on the face of the tomb. Between the shields on the tomb are four lines of disarmingly simple verse:

The worde of God  
Hathe knyt vs twayne  
And Death shall vs  
Divide agayne.

Above the skull are the words: "*Behowlde ovr ende,*" and beneath the corpse: "*Lyve to dye and dye to lyve etarnally.*" The man is forty-seven years old, the woman twenty-eight; they have heavy, dour faces, coarse and strong; large hands; black clothes; and, disappointingly, the surname of Judd. Round the black and gold frame runs another quatrain:

When we are dead and in ovr graves,  
And all ovr bones are rotnn,  
By this shall we remembered be,  
When we should be forgotten.

"And you see," I said to Perdita, "how perfectly right they were. If it wasn't for this picture it's doubtful whether anybody but a research student working at the Leominster wool-trade (there's "Good Lemster" written on the wool-packs) would have ever heard of Mr. and Mrs. Judd.



Whereas here they are, everyone who comes to Dulwich sees them, and automatically wonders about their lives."

"They look pretty odious people, don't they?" said Perdita, "those vast faces and button eyes."

"I expect they were moderately disagreeable. But I like their certainty of resurrection, don't you, and above all I like that clear-cut sixteenth-century view of death. No crematoriums, no wish to forget death at all; if anyone had this sort of thing painted to-day it would be called 'morbid' or '*surréaliste*' or something like that; whereas it seems to me just immensely healthy."

This is one of my favourite subjects. The old medieval acceptance of Death, typified in those curious alabaster tombs to be seen in the dim chapels of almost every cathedral one enters, where a mitred bishop in his robes lies pompously above a cadaverous effigy of his naked body in the last stages of shrunken decay, survived the English Reformation for some decades. It was the Black Death and the Hundred Years War that are thought to have brought about the acute fifteenth-century consciousness of Death in Europe. As the plague receded from the Continent and the long carnage tailed off into bombastic treaties of peace, the walls of churches and cloisters in France, Germany, and England became coated with their legacy of macabre frescoes. The Dance of Death was born. Few of these mural paintings have survived: at Lubeck and Dresden, in the Hungerford Chapel at Salisbury, traces of them may still be seen. The most famous, and certainly the most popular of the late Renaissance Dances, was the series of Holbein woodcuts, published at Lyons in 1547. I do not remember when I first came across these vivid pictures, for I seem to have known them all my life. They are beautifully composed and finely contrasted, the grinning, prancing skeletons, some beating drums, some seizing their victims with bony fingers, all ushering overdressed Renaissance empresses and cardinals, kings, lovers, nuns, soldiers, friars, merchants, money-lenders, paupers and robbers into the common grave. In England the Civil Wars of the Roses had accustomed the

Pastons and their contemporaries to the idea of death. Life was intensely dangerous and death stalked the countryside unchecked. It is strange that we in the twentieth century, with the constant deaths on the by-pass and our R.A.F. crashes every week, are less used to it, and more self-consciously nervous of discussing it, than our sixteenth-century ancestors. Under the comparative safety of the Tudor régime the interest in Death did not diminish immediately. The frequency of executions, with the last heroic speeches and the quick thud of the axe, kept death very near, for Londoners at any rate. They could swarm to Tower Hill to see the Duke of Northumberland dressed in green damask, mount the scaffold steps, and in their houses they could not avoid hearing the dull periodic booming of the Tower guns, thundering out over the river the fall of Catherine Howard's delicate auburn head. The Dance of Death, painted in St. Paul's cloister (which enclosed the plot of ground known as Pardon Churchyard), was destroyed with the building itself in 1549 by order of the Protector Somerset. It had been made in the reign of Henry VI, with verses traditionally attributed to John Lydgate, the canonist, underneath each of the pictures. But in spite of reformers the cult of death spread in sixteenth-century England as much as it did on the Continent. Missals and breviaries illuminated with skeleton figures were replaced by *memento mori* of every kind—heads of walnut from Flanders which contained walnut skulls, wax images of corpses, jewelled skeletons, skulls of silver and gold. As life became more sumptuous, death became so too. Funerals were increasingly splendid and ostentatious; the century, with its wild pagan zest in living, seemed to be laughing at death. In England this gay morbidity stayed on for the first quarter of the seventeenth century, permeating Jacobean thought and literature, yielding place at last to the prim religious ideals of Charles I, and then, irretrievably, to the high seriousness of Commonwealth life.

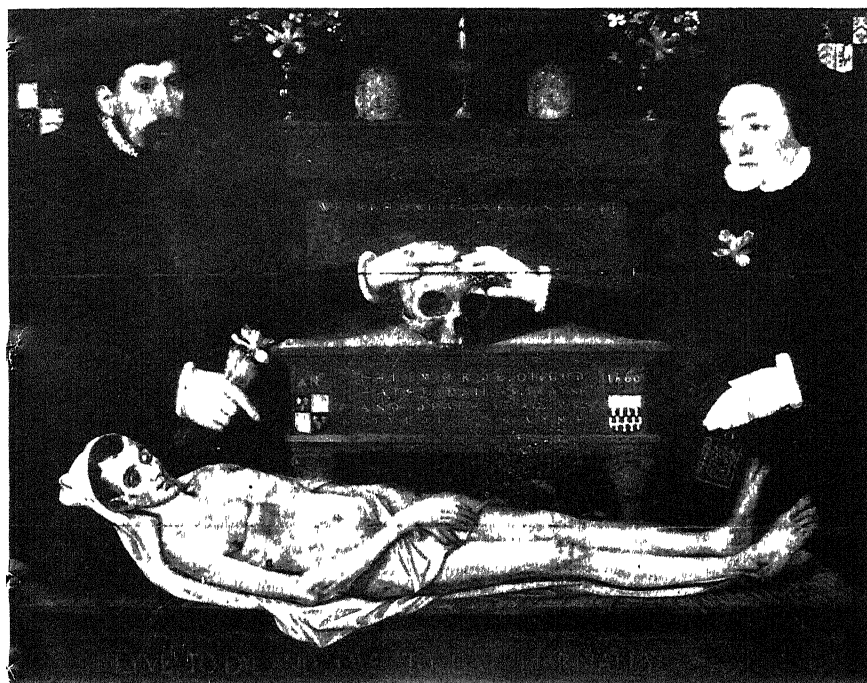
Perdita was more amused by the Judd family than I had anticipated, but still she did not feel that they were worth

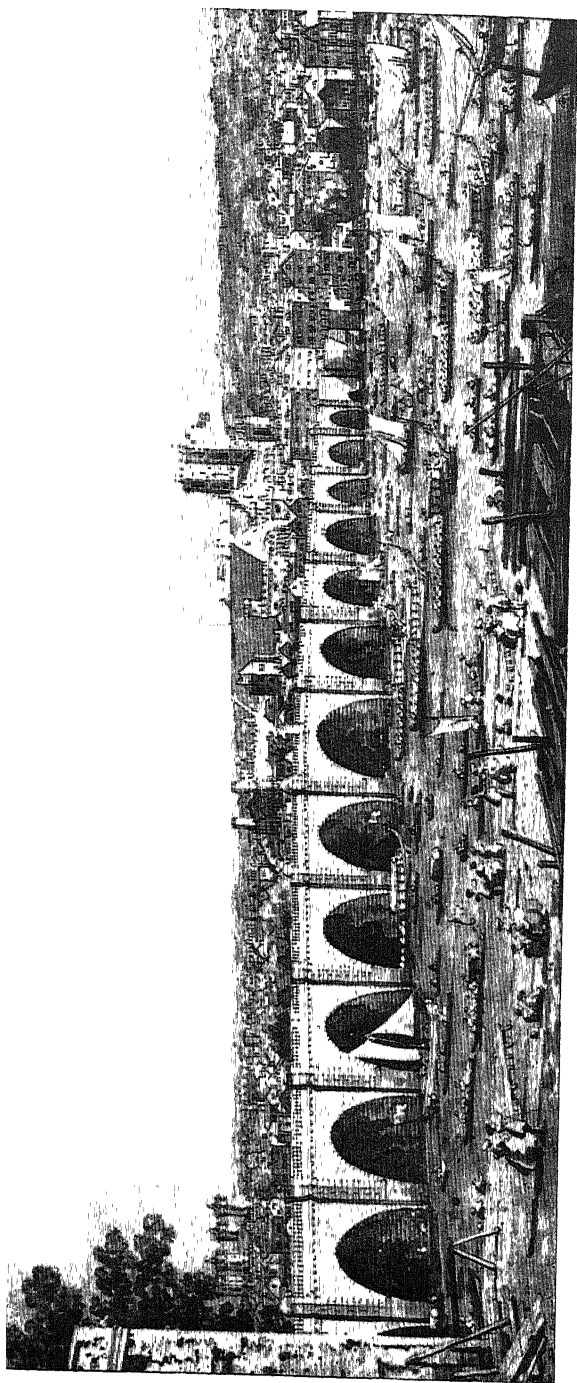


16 Portrait of Edward Alleyn  
*Dulwich Gallery*



17 Portrait of Abraham Cowley, by  
Sir Peter Lely  
*Dulwich Gallery*





19 The Thames at Westminster Bridge, ca 1747, by Canaletto

*Reproduced by gracious permission of H M The King*

wasting time over in a gallery boasting Murillos, Velasquez, Nicholas Poussin, Rembrandt, and two of the loveliest Canaletto scenes in England. I imagine she was getting used to my obstinately antiquarian insistence on looking at early English portraits, for she did not protest at being taken round the miscellaneous collection of them forming part of the Cartwright collection. This bequest, made by an actor late in the seventeenth century, had reaffirmed the stage connection created for Dulwich by Edward Alleyn.

William Cartwright, who died during James II's short reign, left the college his pictures. Some eighty of these are to be seen in the gallery to-day. Cartwright, probably the son of a friend of Alleyn, had acted at the Whitefriars Theatre before the Civil Wars. Under the Commonwealth, when wordy strictures were passed daily on the unseemliness of stage performances, he had wisely taken to the innocuous trade of bookselling, with a shop in the Holborn Turnstile. At the Restoration, like many another actor who had lain low under Cromwell's rule, he returned to the stage. He was evidently a player of a different temper to Alleyn, for we are told that he took such parts as Falstaff in *Henry IV* and Sir Epicure Mammon in *The Alchemist*. He also acted in Dryden's plays. The Restoration theatre must have been a somewhat brutal change for an actor brought up in the early Caroline tradition. The boisterous ribald comedies of Charles II's day were a far cry indeed from the elaborate Jacobean inheritance of Cartwright's youth—the attenuated remnants of the hearty Tudor stage, the foreign and ingenious royal productions, elegant and precious, widening the breach between city and court. Except for the graceful magniloquence of Dryden—*All for Love* is a fair example, the combination of extreme literary beauty, with a boring and mishandled plot—the Restoration theatre is a closed book to me. I find Wycherley and Otway boisterous, exaggerated, and quite remarkably unfunny. This effete lack of appreciation may simply be another facet of my passion for the sixteenth century. I can plough through

volumes of plays like *Arden of Feversham* or *The White Devil* of *Edmonton* with attention and pleasure; *The Country Wife* merely irritates me excessively. I hate the labyrinthine plots of infidelity, the comic cuckold husbands, the bright naughtiness of the Frenchified wives, and the coyness of their serving-girls. Indeed, I feel much the same about the whole period of Charles II. The curvilinear Lely ladies, with their blown draperies and shepherdess's crooks, are symptomatic of the general looseness, the tumbled, inchoate laxity of the reaction from the Commonwealth. In the same way the trim, angular silhouettes of the Tudors, stiff, solid, and magnificent, breaking out towards the end of Elizabeth's reign into the jutting whims of Jacobean dress, reflect the tautness of outlook which I find one of the attractions of the English Renaissance. The clamorous atmosphere of Charles II's court, purulent with sordid intrigue, political and amatory, languid as the lolling Stuart beauties, yet hectic with a determination at all costs to maintain the throne, is to me deeply antipathetic. The life mirrored in Grammont's *Memoirs* (though no doubt his is a distorting glass) is so thoroughly disordered and commonplace. I prefer the ponderous, but wholly delightful, world of Sir Philip Sidney and his sister, so typical of the leisure of their day. My own copy of *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* is a Restoration one, the thirteenth edition printed in 1674. When I was ill once I read through the whole of the *Arcadia*. I began this as a set antiquarian task, prepared for a disappointment as great as *The Apologie for Poetrie* had been (a work which has never seemed to me to reflect an especially remarkable mind). But I was not disappointed. From the opening paragraphs with Strephon and Claius coming to "the sands which lie against the island of Cythara" and the description of Urania's eyelids "more pleasant than two white kids climbing a fair tree," I found it held one with a gentle fascination. And as I read on of "a shepherd's boy piping as though he should never be old," of the morning strewing "Roses and violets in heavenly floor against the coming of the sun," of the "vail of dark clouds" heralding a

storm, of Palladius disguised as an Amazon writing love-verses in a "sandy bank" with a willow-stick, of Philoclea and Pamela and Musidorus, I began to realize that my Charles II edition was singularly unsuitable to the contents. The long eclogues and the High Renaissance pastoral figures must have seemed boredom itself to the modern world of Dryden and Charles II, the ennobled mistresses, the merciless French alliance and the sharp quizzicality of Samuel Pepys. I have thought sometimes that the invidious nineteenth-century conviction of progress was then already getting its stranglehold on the English mind. The conscious political development of the Commonwealth, and the deliberate study of literary form (far different from the classical cadence-making of Jeremy Taylor and Sir Thomas Browne) produced, it seems to me, that Caroline terror of appearing outmoded which would have been but slightly understood by the Tudors. The new world would flock to laugh at that delicious eccentric Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle, following her so closely that Pepys could get but one glimpse of her "antique dress . . . velvet cap, her hair about her ears, many black patches . . . naked necked." She was wondered at by the court and the people as she drove through the park in her great black coach, "adorned with silver instead of gold," with white curtains; they felt as Lamb did later, that she stood out so succinctly from her period because she was original and strange; she was, also, in many ways entirely out of date. I used to be very fond of the Duchess of Newcastle's writings, introduced to them, I fancy, by the *Essays of Elia*. Reading through them again the other day I found them brittle and not very stimulating. Her life of the Duke, a straightforward narrative, decked out with the intricate reflections and whimsical similes irresistible to her, contains some pleasant passages, but much that is barren and dull—estimates of "My Lord's" income, financial complaints, and fulsome lists of the ducal estates. The Duchess's prose resembles an unevenly dressed Christmas-tree, the spangled patches and the dark hollows of bare branch. Her own memoirs make better reading. One

passage, on the deaths of her sister and her brother-in-law, I marked, I notice, with a squiggly pencil line, indicative of enthusiasm. It is often both instructive and daunting to look through a book one marked some years ago, and to see the inexplicable ineptitudes of one's choice.

Nowadays I have given up making notes in books at all; it seems somehow safer. But the passage I marked in Margaret Duchess's memoirs may be worth quoting:

"Though time is apt to waste remembrance as a consumptive body, or to wear it out like a garment into raggs, or to moulder it into dust; yet I find the natural affections I have for my friends are beyond the length, strength, and power of time: for I shall lament the loss so long as I live, also the loss of My Lord's noble brother, which died not long after I returned from England. . . . I will build his monument of truth, though I cannot of marble, and hang my tears and scutcheons on his tomb."

I am not certain that I should have liked the Duchess of Newcastle any better than many of her contemporaries did, but seen across the canyon of two and a half centuries she looks attractive and odd. Her humour, as shown in the plays she wrote and watched acted in London, is sadly defective. The names of the characters of *Love's Adventures* speak for themselves: Sir Serious Dumbe, Sir Timothee Complement, the Lady Ignorant, the Lady Wagtail, the heroine gallivanting as a soldier under the name of Affectionata. Perhaps Margaret Duchess of Newcastle was after all as much of her age as any of the Restoration playwrights.

Although Cartwright seems to have acted throughout Charles II's reign, he left the college few portraits of Restoration players. It is earlier actors, Richard Burbage, Nat Field "in his shurt," the playwright Drayton and others of their day are more fully represented. The pictures he bequeathed were of two kinds: genre pieces and topical portraits. Amongst the former were such subjects as "a company of Jepseys," "a he foole with a candle and a shee foole with a moustrap," still



lives of a glass of claret, a loaf of bread, "an oring, 2 apprecocks," and so on. There were copies of Italian pictures "after Bassan," and one or two Biblical scenes—"Shusana and ye 2 Elders," for example. Among the portraits, are those of himself, his first wife, and his sister-in-law, by the English painter Greenhill; also a picture of his father, bluntly designated in the catalogue as "ould Cartwright." A loyal subject, Cartwright also possessed pictures of Charles I, "Buship Laud . . . in black and whit . . . a small closet piece," and two portraits of "Queen Mary." It is momentarily startling to recognize Henrietta Maria under this last title. I supposed one is used to limiting this name to Mary Tudor, or Mary II, or the revered and dignified figure of our newsreels to-day. "Queen Mary" seems so irrelevant in application to Henrietta Maria. That it was no colloquial slip of Cartwright's pen is, however, shown by similar references elsewhere. Anne Clifford in her memoirs speaks of her second husband Lord Pembroke as "never out of England, but some months when he went into France . . . to attend Queen Mary," and that nobly intransigent, if narrow-minded, woman Lucy Hutchinson, attributes, with the swift credulity of Cromwell's followers, some part of the Stuart calamities to the Queen's second name. "It hath been observed that a French queen never brought any happiness to England. Some kind of fatality, too, the English imagined to be in her name of Marie, which, it is said, the King chose rather to have her called by than her other Henrietta, because the land should find a blessing in that name, which had been more unfortunate; but it was not in his power, though a great prince to control destiny."

Apart from the stage portraits and the royal ones, Cartwright left a batch of pictures of the Lovelace family. There is "Sergeant Loulass," "My Lord Loulass," "Colonel Loulass in armour." "Thomas Loulass" of the year of the Armada "with a harelip," and Sir William Lovelace in black armour. "Colonel Loulass" is the cavalier poet Richard, author of the famous:

Stone walls do not a prison make  
 Nor iron bars a cage;  
 Minds innocent and quiet take  
 That for an hermitage.

Among Cartwright's pictures is a woman's head, docketed "Althea" in the catalogue; she wears a tawny dress, and her hand is tangled in her hair; whether it is indeed a portrait of the object of Lovelace's affections is questionable. Lovelace, and to a lesser extent, Sir John Suckling, are old attachments of mine.

Tell me not, sweet, I am unkind  
 That from the nunnery,  
 Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind  
 To war and arms I fly.

It is one of the poems which form the backbone of every anthology, but none the worse perhaps for that.

Of another Caroline poet, Abraham Cowley, Dulwich possesses two portraits. One is the Lely of him as a very young man, with shining, flowing hair, holding a flute in his right hand and a shepherd's wand in his left. The other is a prosaic oval picture, done some twenty years later, by that uninspiring painter Mary Beale. The Lely, with its rocky landscape background, and the pretty languor of the pose, the full, childish face and parted lips, is possibly too well known to merit description. It is one of the few Lelys that I whole-heartedly admire; the painter has instilled into his picture a light spiritual beauty greater, I think, than that of the poet's verse. I am ashamed to say that until last Christmas I had never read any Cowley at all. It is in a way pleasant, if slightly shaming, to know that one has as many English writers and poets yet to read as I have. It may simply be laziness, or some radical defect, that has made me omit almost all the novels of Jane Austen, everything of Meredith, Samuel Butler, and George Moore, a good deal of Shelley, and more of Byron from my "general reading." I do not feel that an intimate knowledge of Beddoes, and the remnants of an outrageously complete

acquaintanceship with Sir Walter Scott, altogether compensate one for this hiatus. Again, I have never had the time, nor a sufficiently good knowledge of French to get through more than the first volume of Proust; and without Proust one is undoubtedly at a discount with the modern intelligentsia. I have soaked myself in Balzac, but evidently that is not the same thing at all; as an ardent admirer of Proust once said to me: "How can you read the *Comédie Humaine*? It is so easy." Anyway, I did not know more of Cowley than his name when I was given the splendid Nonesuch selection of his works last year. But I found him dispiriting. He is tainted with the Restoration. The cynical charm of *The Mistress* and the other love poems I actively resent:

Five years ago (says Story) I loved you,  
For which you call me most inconstant now;  
Pardon me, Madam, you mistake the man;  
For I am not the same that I was than.

It may be some romantic, ostrich-like quality of soul that makes me again prefer Sir Philip Sidney, presenting the reverse of the medal:

Who hath ever felt the change of love,  
And knowne those pangs that the losers prove,  
May paint my face without seeing mee,  
And write the state how my fancies bee,  
The lothsome buds growne on sorrowes tree.

. . . . .

For me alas I am full resolv'd,  
Those bands alas shall not be dissolv'd,  
Nor breake my word though reward come late,  
Nor faile my faith in my failing fate,  
Nor change in change, though change change my state.

Cowley's saccharine promiscuity, and the artificial laments for his soul fled away are, to me, more unreal than the most ingenious of late Tudor conceits. The Lely picture, with the feminine, discontented little face, corresponds very well to the estimate I form of Cowley from his poems.

One of the greatest assets of Dulwich gallery is its size. The compact rooms, for all their impressive contents, do not bewilder and exhaust one. Perdita and I had gone round slowly, returning sometimes to look at pictures we had left, and nearly two hours glided imperceptibly away. It was four o'clock when we had finished, and we wandered up into Dulwich to see if there was any possibility of tea. The street beyond the gallery has kept its village feeling, with high elms and grass by the roadside, and low cottages set back behind iron gates. I do not know why when I think of Dulwich I think mostly of trees and not of pictures; perhaps penned up in a suburb trees are more vital than in the natural freedom of the woods and fields.

## IV

### HERTFORD HOUSE

“DO you think,” asked Perdita, “that one could have stood all this? I think it would have been shattering; I should have hated it.”

“Now would you,” said I, ignoring the question, “that’s very mistaken of you; you of all people ought to like these things.”

We were standing in the doorway of a corner room on the first floor of Hertford House. Before us was a gleaming vista, galleries of ormolu-encrusted furniture, walls alight with Boucher and Fragonard. I was put out that Perdita should dislike the superb creations of Riesner and Gouthière, restrained yet gorgeous, and the earlier flagrant magnificence of the bulging Rocaille tables of the French Regency. I felt the disappointment I always feel when someone strays from their genre. It was obvious that Perdita and these objects belonged together, if only because the pale gold ormolu exactly reflected and enhanced the effulgence of her pale gold hair. But it was more than that; when I had first met her I had thought of Versailles, and now seeing her surrounded by things made for the court of France in the epoch when the taste of France most dominated Europe, I knew with certainty that my instinct had been right. We had not been long in Hertford House, but already it was evident how admirably Perdita might blend with furniture such as this. Properly assembled, the Cressent tables, the *secrétaires* and *bonheurs du jour* to which Gouthière’s oval plaques are clasped, the tortured Stollewerke clocks, heavy with goddesses peering at the dials, the Clodion bronzes and the porphyry urns, would have formed the very scenery she needs. Yes, already an ephemeral relationship seemed springing up between these things and Perdita, brief suggestions of promise of what she and they could have made

together, given the place and the time; hints of that subtlest of all mysteries, the reciprocal comprehension of certain individuals and inanimate things. And now, by her abrupt dismissal, she seemed to have turned her back on their tentative advances, to have left them to sink again into their stiff gilt lethargy to wait for the passage of some other being capable of awakening some response. And they will, I thought, have to wait a long, long time.

"I wonder," she said, "if the eighteenth century really glittered like this?"

"I always feel it did in France, don't you; I see it as shimmering with light, a sort of tumult of ormolu and veneer and marble and brocade, tiers of candles in *salons*, white temples in green groves, the sun streaming through the trees of formal avenues, *fêtes-champêtres* by the river-bank, fantastic travelling coaches rolling ponderously along dusty sunlit roads, everything light and coloured and moving, and full of grace."

"Perhaps it was like that; I'm not sure; but do you see eighteenth-century England as very dark?"

"Not very dark," I replied, "but very drab; quite monochrome, like a brown, faded Reynolds. I suppose it's the way one's taught history, but England in the eighteenth century only makes me think of political factions, the Hanoverians, Alexander Pope, Chippendale, Lord North's Ministry, and the Stamp Act; but then that's pure prejudice. About France, though, I know three pictures that would show what I mean; to me they represent eighteenth-century France. Two of them are here, and the other one is in the Gulbenkian Collection in the National Gallery."

I am never sure whether my constant search for the characteristic, the typical, and the evocative, is a help or a hindrance towards understanding a period or a person. I suspect that it is fundamentally a limitation. To think of eighteenth-century France in terms of Boucher and Fragonard is to miss so many facets of the whole that it seems at times ridiculous even to myself. What of Rousseau and Voltaire, for example? The Regency? Fénélon? the Seven

Years War? Marie Antoinette? Chenier? Robespierre? Madame Roland? How can I ever understand these people and the things they represent, sheltering as I do within the translucent glades of Fragonard, beneath those feathery trees, beside those gently gurgling streams? Penned in this soft, romantic world, the twilight slanting slowly through the marble arches of Watteau, the sunlight sending lemon-coloured shafts to emphasize the careless gaiety of Lancret's figures, the blue haze through which Hubert Robert shows one Italian ruins, how can one consider dispassionately, or even with attention, the loss of Canada, the fall of Pondicherry, or the iniquities of the tax on salt? But with the days of examinations behind me, and life stretching out before, I know that I mind less and less about the economic inequalities that brought about the French Revolution, and more and more about the Fragonard in the National Gallery, the dark water with the crowded boat upon it, the mysterious tunnelled background of blue-green trees, the hollow cave to the right hand, and the strange and exhilarating beauty of it all. But then, I remind myself, I am not a serious person.

"Both the pictures that I'm talking about here," I said to Perdita, "are exaggeratedly well known; but that doesn't make any difference. One of them is just behind you."

I indicated the Boucher portrait of Madame de Pompadour, leaning with languid wisdom against a marble group of *l'Amour et l'Amitié*, symbolic of her changed relations with the king. Her dress is the colour of yellow tea-roses, and is full with flounces and lace; at her elbows are soft cascades of lace ruffles, and round her neck a collar of gauze and lace. She leans there, on her elbow in the sunshine, with the marble looming mistily behind her in the gathering gloom of the trees; on a seat to the right of the picture perches her favourite spaniel, Iñez, and at the Marquise's feet lie scattered roses. Fixed for ever in this dream-garden, with its deep shadows and its tranquil light, Madame de Pompadour gazes with a lofty benevolence out into the world of to-day, oblivious of modern criticisms of her foreign policy and of

the unappreciative and sedate summary of her life in the Wallace Collection catalogue.

"It's logical that she should be the incarnation of her age," I said, "since she was in fact its creator. This was painted in 1759, five years before she died; she always kept it, and she bequeathed it to her brother. Do you see how quint-essential it is, this picture? But we may as well look at the other one, I think, the Fragonard 'Swing.'"

*The Swing* is too famous, and too often reproduced, to warrant description, but it can be studied unceasingly and never, I fancy, go stale on one. The light and the life of it, the movement and the colours and the trees and the gestures, the illumined leaves, the tunnel of light reversing, as it were, the composition of the National Gallery lake scene with its tunnel of darkness—all this can carry one into a world of soft and lovely radiance, whence one emerges dazed, nostalgic and enriched. For some minutes we stood in front of it in silence.

"I'm glad we saw this," said Perdita, "one forgets how wonderful it is, for it *is* wonderful, isn't it? If only the eighteenth century had been all that; but beside it the ormolu and these," she waved her hand at the cabinets, "seem heavy and somehow too definite; they have no subtlety, only finish."

"It's craftsmanship and not art, I suppose," I answered, "or do you think that isn't true?"

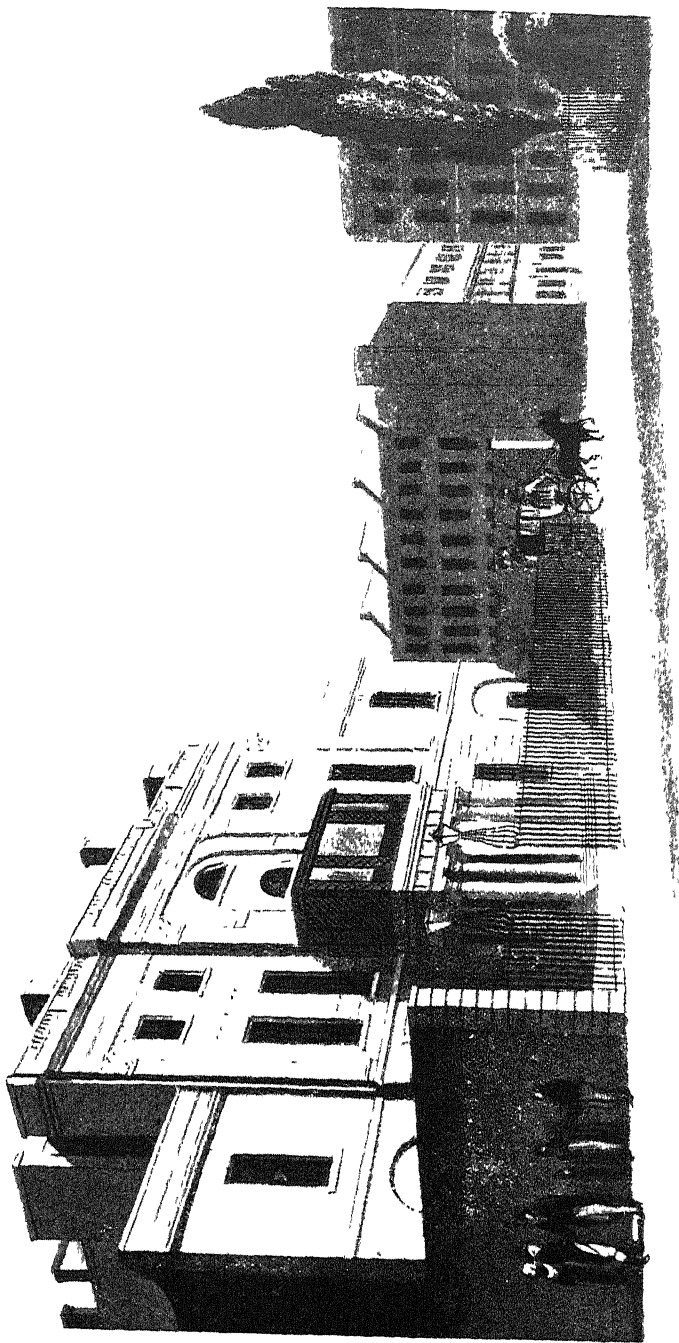
We walked on looking at the pictures.

"It's amazing to think that all this was collected by one man," said Perdita, "or was it?"

"Well, not quite by one man," I replied, "by three or four at the outside; but one man was responsible for most of it, anyway, the best eighteenth-century things. If we sit down I can tell you about it."

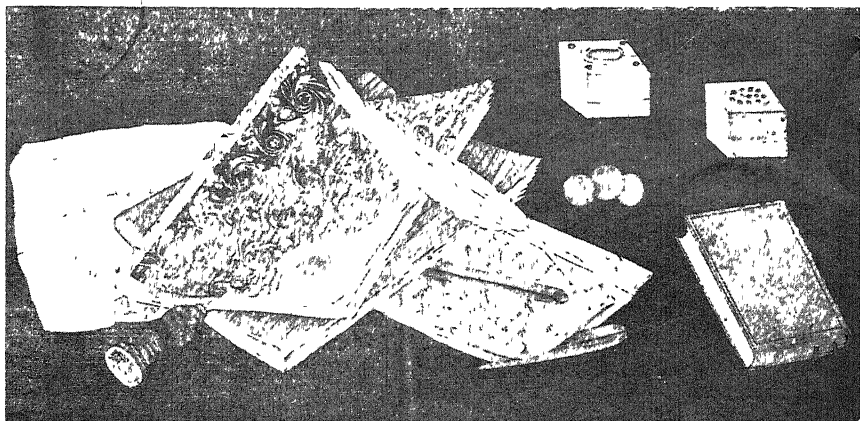
We took chairs in the great picture-gallery, sitting opposite Velasquez's *Don Balthasar Carlos in the Riding School*, and I tried to explain why the Wallace Collection is at once more homogeneous, and to me more agreeable than other London museums. Though much of its contents—two-thirds of the





20 Hertford House in the early Nineteenth Century

*From Ackermann's "Select Views of London"*



21 Marquetry Detail of the "Bureau du Roi Stanislas," showing Riesener's signature

*From the original in the Wallace Collection—by permission*



22 Allegorical Love Feast, by Pourbus

*From the picture in the Wallace Collection—by permission*

pictures, for instance—are not French, the general effect is that of a great Paris house of the last century. I have always liked the contrast presented by the still, colourless dignity of Manchester Square, the flat-faced houses, the dingy railings, the pavement, and the trees in the square garden on the one hand, and the riotous beauty of the collections behind the staid façade and the glass swing-doors of Hertford House. As it is now shown to the public, the Wallace Collection was devised by Sir Richard Wallace well over half a century ago. One day in the late autumn of the year 1871, Sir Richard, newly married, fresh from the siege of Paris, and the inheritor of the collections of his father Lord Hertford, who had died in August of the year before, stepped across the threshold of the great house in Manchester Square, and entered rooms vacant for more than thirty years. Since 1836 Manchester House had been shut up, becoming a legend in the neighbourhood, the stolid, fine building with its blinded windows and its high-ceilinged rooms, within which lay hoarded some part of the treasures of the Marquesses of Hertford. Built under George III for the Duke of Manchester, later housing in succession the Spanish and the French embassies, Manchester House passed at length to the Seymours. The third Marquess of Hertford, a friend of George IV, and one of those ostentatious English noblemen whose grandeur dazzled all Europe, had lived mainly in his villa in Regent's Park, St. Dunstan's (recently destroyed), which he had built and furnished in a peculiarly luxurious way. Periodically he inhabited Manchester House; Madame Vigée le Brun is among those who have left accounts of the swarming routs which he and Lady Hertford gave. His son, the fourth Marquess, was an ailing recluse who lived in Paris, and scarcely visited Manchester Square at all. Despite this voluntary Parisian exile, he took a certain interest in the London house, sending over new acquisitions to be stored in it, and buying through his London agent pictures for it which he had not even seen. The fourth marquess had inherited his father's dilettante tastes to an extreme, indeed an excessive, degree. He had

also inherited a number of houses, and an income reckoned at £240,000 a year. In his very young days he had served in the Dragoons, retiring on half-pay at the age of twenty-three, and before this he had been attached to the embassy in Paris. Later he had gone with Sir Robert Gordon to Constantinople, and at another moment he had sat for four years in the House of Commons as member for County Antrim, where lay his vast hereditary estates of Lisburn. But this was as far as his public service had gone; as the frigid though inevitably snobbish obituary notices observed, "Lord Hertford's taste was artistic, not political"; he preferred Paris under Louis Napoleon, and the fevered delights of collecting to the responsible and pompous execution of what his compatriots considered to be the duties of his station. He is not an attractive figure, with his narrow eyes, large moustache and chin-tuft, living alone in the house he had had built for himself in the Rue Lafitte, sleeping in a bedroom which contained two hundred miniatures. Day after day he would sit there in the closely packed splendour of his house, receiving dealers and discussing auction sales. His other Paris house, the pavilion of Bagatelle in the Bois, designed for the Comte d'Artois, was similarly filled with objects. Lord Hertford's taste, though tinged by that of his epoch, was in many ways in advance of his contemporaries: his passion for the French eighteenth century was not yet generally shared, his assiduous admiration of Boucher, Watteau, and Bonington still seemed strange. He had, however, the conventional academic interest in the subject of a picture, liking to possess, as he once confessed, only "pleasing pictures." For primitives he had no use at all. Never seen in London, Lord Hertford was scarcely visible even in Paris, where his secluded existence gave him the reputation of a civilized eccentric with two or three intimate friends.

"Even his concern for old animals," I said to Perdita, "doesn't make him a sympathetic figure; he used to pen off pieces of the grounds at Bagatelle into parks for derelict dogs; collecting on that scale in that seclusion suggests a lack of detachment."

"What do you quite mean?" she asked, "surely too much detachment is a bad thing?"

"I'm told not," I said, "but then one never knows. What I mean is, that however violent a collector you are, you ought, it seems to me, to maintain a light seat to the things you collect; otherwise you get so inhuman and withered—think of most of the collectors one sees about, little old creatures drained of life and entombed by their possessions."

When Lord Hertford at last died, in August of 1870, the Second Empire was sagging to its fall. He left the whole of his collections, his houses, and his fortune to his bastard son Sir Richard Wallace, a bachelor of fifty-two. It was Sir Richard's decision to live in London that brought him over in 1871 to examine with his friend Yriarte the possibilities of residing in Manchester Square. Many years afterwards Yriarte published a description of their entry into the deserted house. He likened it to the palace of the Sleeping Beauty. A staff of old servants, living in the stables and out-houses, had kept the rooms themselves fairly clean; but the pictures were in an alarming condition. Titians, Van Dycks, Rubens, Reynolds, Yriarte listed them haphazardly, all were black with grime. These "living and radiant works" had in the course of thirty years "become covered with a thick coating of bloom" through which they shone "as through a veil." Three days of washing with pailfuls of "clear, fresh water," however, restored them to their former state.

The alterations the Wallaces judged necessary included the removal of the English staircase, and its replacement by the present one with its Louis Quatorze balustrade. When in 1872 the reconstruction was completed, London society was agog to get inside this mysterious palace. At first a series of brilliant receptions gave ample opportunity for scrutiny of the contents and embellishments of Hertford House, as it had been re-christened. But no sooner was the house well open than it was in effect shut up again. By 1873 the welcome hospitality had dwindled to showing a picked handful of guests over a few of the rooms. Finally, even this was

abandoned, and it was extraordinarily hard to see anything of the interior at all. Sir Richard's closest friends were not allowed beyond the study, and no one could enter a room on the other side of this, where were displayed the choicest pieces of gold-work, together with enamels, ivories, miniatures, and majolica; sixteenth-century French portraits hung upon the walls, with Cox and Turner water-colours as incongruous neighbours. Towards the end of his life Sir Richard Wallace made valiant efforts to bequeath the house and its contents to the nation; piqued and defeated by official apprehension of Treasury liabilities, he left the whole thing to his wife. Aided by her husband's secretary, with whom she maintained a relationship of some intimacy, Lady Wallace drew up a careful will, embodying what she knew to have been her husband's intentions. On her death in 1897 the Manchester Square collections passed to the English public, the remainder of the Hertford possessions to the secretary, Mr. Murray Scott. The bulk of these latter collections have since been dispersed, much of them by Victoria Lady Sackville; the legal issues involved in her inheritance from Sir John Murray Scott are recent history. I myself own one tiny fragment of the Hertford accumulations, a red chalk preparation by Bartolozzi for an engraved portrait of Angelica Kauffman, the gift of Lady Sackville's grandson; in my eyes it has more value as a reminder of that great crowded Paris house in the last century, and the unreal life lived by the recluse within it.

. . . . .

"That seems to me a very good Velasquez," said Perdita, "I'm glad we sat in front of it."

"I like it, too," I replied, "that metallic light in the sky; people have said it's not a genuine Velasquez, but in any case it is very beautiful. I like the portraits of Don Balthasar Carlos, don't you; he died at seventeen."

We looked for some minutes more at the little proud figure of Don Balthasar Carlos, in his plumed hat, sitting astride a rearing black horse with a wide flowing tail; behind him the

white stables roofed with tiles, and grey and black groups of onlookers. From the left a bluish light sheds a late afternoon pallor over the whole, the little riding child, the plaster walls, the watchers, and the clouded sky.

"I want you to look at this desk," I said, "because I'd like to know what you think of it. It's supposed to be one of Riesner's masterpieces."

In the picture-gallery, near the end at which we had entered, stands the colossal cylinder desk made by Riesner for Stanislaus of Poland. This famous piece bears upon its surface an elaboration of design which is bold almost to vulgarity. An open book, a violin, a cockerel, ribbons, and many other oddments play their part in the marqueterie decoration of this ornate and enormous writing-desk.

"It's lovely in a way, isn't it?" said Perdita.

"Oh, yes, it is, but it's not one's way, is it?" I replied.

"Is Riesner a German name?"

"Yes," I said, "he came, I believe, from Cologne; but then the funny thing is that eighty per cent of the *ébénistes* working in Paris at this moment were Germans. And they did superb work; which just goes to show that one shouldn't generalize about German taste."

"But wasn't it simply that they had adopted French taste?"

"Possibly, but even so, there is something very German about Riesner's things. I sometimes think that Riesner and Oban and all the French *ébénistes* compensate in some way for the Hanoverian monarchy."

"I don't quite follow that."

"Well, what I think I mean is that it's something to know that in Paris at that moment Germans were producing fine and stimulating things, because in eighteenth-century London the Hanoverian intrusion meant the blotting out of the last remnants of Stuart taste, and the decorative traditions of the English monarchy. The hideous boredom of the Hanoverian court is one of the things that don't bear a moment's thought. It sticks out a mile."

"But didn't you say the *ébénistes* came from Cologne and

George I came from Hanover? And Germany wasn't unified; how can you talk sweepingly of German taste at a time when Germany didn't exist?"

"In the same way that you can talk sweepingly of Italian taste when Italy didn't exist as a political entity; and look what German taste did in the nineteenth century; think of Osborne and Balmoral; think of the interior of Windsor Castle; personally, I'd rather not."

We went on round the pictures, looking sketchily at the Van Dyck full-lengths, the Peter de Hooch interiors, and the simpering Reynolds children. In front of Gainsborough's *Mrs. Robinson as Perdita* we halted.

"This," I said, "seems to me everything that the Boucher Pompadour is not; it's theatrical, self-conscious, saccharine; yet I suppose a beautiful picture; frankly, I get tired of Gainsborough."

"I think it's her feet that are so tiresome," said Perdita, "those little pointed shoes sticking out into the corner like that; but I agree it's pretty unpleasant."

Circling the big gallery we came back into the room which contains my favourite pictures at Hertford House, speaking from the historical and not the aesthetic standpoint. In the centre of the left wall of this room hangs a large Renaissance picture, a Love-feast in a forest, by the elder Pourbus. Here you get the full, rank flavour of the High Renaissance as it ripened in the low-lying plains of the Netherlands, with the heavy, gorgeous, and unimaginative merchant life of the prosperous steepled cities of the north. The scene is the edge, perhaps, of a great forest, tree-trunks curling upwards, sprays with meticulously painted leaves against the sky, in the distance a river with smaller trees upon its banks, a town, a windmill, mountains far away. Round a circular stone table seven men and women are seated; on the ground at one side lies a jester, at the other a man supported by two women, one with a cupid on her knees. Behind the table another woman stoops forward, with a fillet of flowers about her hair, her hands laid one upon the other. To the extreme right two riding figures come slowly through the trees from a castle



gate with round, strong towers. The four men about the table and the seven women in the foreground pay little attention to the fruit and cakes before them; their brisk, licentious activities suggest a page from the *Heptameron* of Marguerite de Navarre. One only, a central figure fully clothed in the court fashions of the day with puffs along the sleeves, a small tight ruff, and a posy of flowers in her hand, gesticulates towards the food; the other women, in various stages of undress, are too occupied to attend to her admonitions. Each figure is labelled, the sedate court lady, beside whom sits an old man with a grey beard, being *Fidutia*, and the others *Pasithea*, *Aglais*, *Euphrosine*, *Affectio*, *Cordialitas*, *Reverentia*, *Adonis*, *Daphnis*, *Sapiens*, and *Acontius*; a hotch-potch allegory indeed.

"It's supposed to teach that love is for youth and loyalty the only thing that age can expect; but I don't feel sure of the interpretation, do you?" I said.

"There's such a lot going on, isn't there," said Perdita, "it needs time to disentangle and understand. But it is amusing and good."

Opposite the Pourbus are two Elizabethan portraits, one of an unknown man with a false inscription: "*Robertus Co: Leicestriae*" the other a flamboyant portrait which has more recently been wrongly identified as Leicester. This last is a good example of the identity puzzles which make historical portraiture such a fascinating study. It represents a Knight of the Garter in a doublet of tawny satin slashed and intricately paned, sewn with many knots of pearl and golden thread, a small lace ruff at the neck, the face bold and intransigent, large-nosed and wide-eyed, bearded, coarse, and hot, with black satanic eyebrows and a clipped tongue of coal-black hair thrust forward over his brow from beneath the black jewelled cap. Eminently, it is the portrait of a headstrong and unsubtle man. On the sword gripped by his left hand you can read *Aetatis 28 156-*, the last figure being hidden. Now in the 1560's there were only two knights of the Garter of twenty-eight years of age: Leicester and the Duke of Norfolk. To Norfolk, says the catalogue, this

picture, bears no resemblance at all; Leicester, think the authorities, was startlingly like this dark, full-blooded man. A moment's comparison with either of the Norfolk portraits at Arundel and Tring should have shown them that this picture is in fact the most important visual document of the duke extant to-day. The features, the colouring, the expression, the tongue of black hair, all prove beyond any doubt whatever that it is Norfolk and not Leicester, Leicester whose face was rounded and delicate, whose moustache was silken and reddish, whose pale hair early receded from his forehead. A final proof is to be found in a drawing of Norfolk's head in a private collection, reproduced in the volume of the *Catholic Records Society* dealing with the life of his son the Blessed William Howard.

"Was he the Norfolk who was beheaded?" asked Perdita.

"Yes," I replied, "and don't you think this shows you why?"

The improbability of Norfolk's continued popularity at Elizabeth's court is indeed emphasized by his iconography. How could this fierce but indecisive man surmount the dangers implicit in his position as cousin to the Queen, the only living English duke, son of the executed poet Surrey, possessed of estates which, as he foolishly boasted to Her Majesty, made him "in a sort not inferior to some kings." In the atmosphere of survival of the wildest which inevitably impregnated the corridors and galleries of Elizabeth's palaces, it was to a great extent unavoidable that the fourth Duke of Norfolk should go under. But to contemporaries this may not have been wholly evident. The Duke enjoyed a popularity which in itself was ominous:

. . . happie, happie Duke, the second chylde of Fame,  
What age hath seen his like?

ran a ditty "in the worthy praise of an high and mightie Prince," published in London much about the date of this portrait. Ralph Brooke, a diligent officer of the Heralds' College, who exasperated Camden by pointing out errors in the *Britannia*, and spent some time correcting Stowe's *Annals*,

testified to Norfolk's liberality in his *Catalogue of the Peerage* published many decades later, under James I: "this Noble Duke was a great Friend and Benefactor to the Officers of Arms." To many people his position must have seemed indeed happy and impregnable; actually it was irretrievably unsound. During the reign of Edward VI, Norfolk and his brother had been cared for by their aunt the Duchess of Richmond, the sister of Surrey and daughter-in-law of Henry VIII, a widow whose tranquil face Holbein has preserved in what is perhaps the loveliest of the Windsor drawings. The Duchess had engaged Foxe the martyrologist to educate her nephews; on the accession of Mary this heretic influence was swiftly removed, and the Duke was restored in blood; Elizabeth made him a knight and a Privy Councillor, and he was married successively to a daughter of the Earl of Arundel and to Lady Henry Dudley, whose father was Lord Audley of Walden. On the death of his second wife the Duke lived alone with his children in the carved magnificence of the Charterhouse in London, with its noble staircase and great Tudor ceilings, to which traces of bright colour yet adhere to-day. All might have been well, had the Duke's character been more pronounced, his mind less simple, and his conduct less wayward. Pardoned for his part in the Rising of the Northern Earls, he soon drifted into the octopus clutch of Ridolfi's melodramatic plot to kill the Queen. There had been some intrigue at court about the whispered proposals for the Duke's marriage to the Queen of Scots; at best it was a half-hearted and timid affair, Leicester promising all and performing nothing, but the Duke lent a ready ear to the schemers. When he refused to sign any documents, Ridolfi and his cryptographers seem to have signed them for him; and unquestionably the prospect of the royal alliance attracted Norfolk, and the intimate dulcet tones of the letters from Sheffield Castle, and the cameo jewel Mary sent him. And so the whole fantastic plot rumbled on, and, quite naturally, its cumbrous repercussions reached the attentive ears of the Queen. Norfolk had really no excuse for this wanton intrigue, he lacked Mary Stuart's

Guise-can aptitude for such things, and there was not the soul-destroying boredom of a midland prison to justify him. In the popular mind Mary had now become a wicked but irresistible siren, luring the English nobility to its doom; in Catholic eyes she was already taking on the aspect of a martyr. Robert Southwell's lines on her death beautifully synthesize this sensitive Catholic loyalty:

Rue not my deathe, rejoyce at my repose,  
It was no death to mee but to my woe  
The bud was opened to let owt the rose,  
The cheynes unloosed to let the captive goe.

A Prince by birth, a prisoner by mishappe,  
From crowne to crosse, from throne to thrall I fell,  
My right my ruth, my tytles wrought my trapp,  
My weale my woe, my world my heaven my hell . . .

But at the time of the Ridolfi plot Mary Stuart had thirteen more years of chronic rheums, headaches, lute-playing, and letter-writing before her. Official inquiry was of necessity credulous over the plot, and the charges against Alva's agent, Dr. Story, that he had consulted "with one Pershall a conjuror to make away with the Queen" is typical of the mood of the moment. Norfolk could not be pardoned again, and so in June 1572 the last English duke Tudor subjects ever saw climbed the steps of the scaffold, a victim as distinguished as any of those beheaded in the old Henrican days.

"As we've seen Norfolk," I said to Perdita, "I think we might go downstairs and look at the Mary Stuart in white mourning, and the other sixteenth-century portraits."

We went down the small staircase from the room in which Norfolk and the Love-feast hang, and passing the armour galleries which occupy the space used in Sir Richard Wallace's lifetime as stables and coach-houses, we came to a room containing Limoges enamels, bronze medals, wax medallions, and one or two busts. We looked closely at the enamels, the great dishes with their eager gods and goddesses in draperies of shining turquoise-blue, purple, green, and

gold, playing in a romantic French landscape, the very incarnation of Valois taste. My attachment to these gay Renaissance platters (I was then less fond of the earlier and more restrained medieval enamels from Limoges, the crucified Christs, the severe mitred bishops in reliefs, the heads of croziers, curling like fern-fronds and inset with blue and gold) led me once to make an expedition to Limoges. I was seventeen, and I have never forgotten that expedition. Limoges, from which I had hoped much as the scene of Balzac's *Curé de Village*, was in itself disappointing; but the train journey there, by the banks of the tranquil Vienne in the early morning, the sun dissolving the mist above the river, the workers in the cornfields across the water, and finally the towers of Limoges Cathedral appearing on the horizon, form a scene stamped on my memory. Limoges I found to be a steep and industrialized town with a huge modern station. The cathedral, where I went to mass, is an unexciting example of French Gothic; the enamels in the cathedral treasury are poor and late. The palace of the archbishop with terraces overlooking the river and fine eighteenth-century rooms, was more impressive; this, and the enamels in the museum are well worth the journey. I left Limoges with my love of its enamels magnified; for now when I see them my mind is divided between their own beauty and far more tantalizing visions of the sunlight on the Vienne and the terraces of the archiepiscopal palace, or of the stumbling, gaudy procession of the cathedral canons, old and bent and slow, as they entered the choir of the cathedral for high mass that Sunday. Does this silting up of vision by the sands of memory, the immediate beauty overlaid by layer upon layer of subjective associations, aid or prevent aesthetic appreciation? I often wonder; I do not know.

Walking along the wall-cases of enamels we came upon a superb bronze bust of Charles IX of France, by Germain Pilon, the sculptor of the effigies of Henri II and Catherine de Medicis on their tomb at St. Denis. Bronze is a most unsuitable substance for a portrait of any of the later Valois.

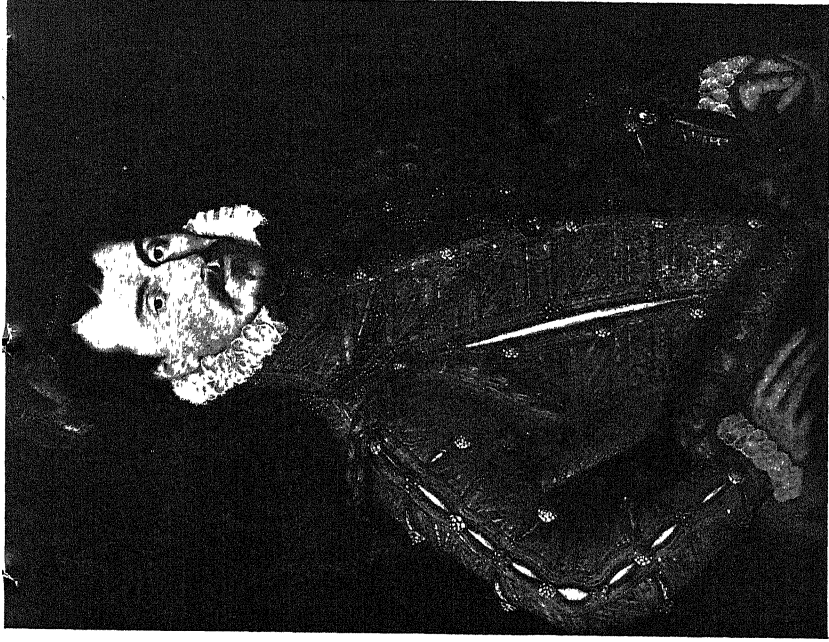
The sons of Catherine de Medicis had neither the heroic faces nor the heroic characters which this material demands. In spite of the mental instability of his subject, Pilon has created a magnificent type of French royalty, noble, strong, determined, a bronze of monarchy itself. The chiselled head is wreathed with laurel leaves, upon the shoulders a mantle sewn with fleur-de-lis flows loosely over an embossed corselet. The forehead and the line of the lips indicate a firmness of character which Charles IX most emphatically lacked; only the side-glancing eyes, and the tight, smooth skin drawn round them suggest that we are in the presence of a Valois.

"Isn't the wickedness of the Valois," said Perdita, "absurdly over-rated? Like that of the Borgias, I mean."

"Up to a point," I replied, "I suppose it is. But neither they nor the Borgias can be convincingly whitewashed, nor do I see why they should be. Like Mary Queen of Scots, they represent that peculiarly Renaissance mixture of religiosity, elegance and spasmodic amorality. You get it in the Bartholomew Massacre, just as you get it in Darnley's murder; it was much more ruthless than Elizabeth's elaborate shilly-shallying, and in its way rather admirable. I never understand devotees of Mary Queen of Scots who try to prove that she didn't commit crimes; they reduce her to the proportions of Marie Antoinette; in reality the whole interest of her character is the incompatibilities of it all—religion, murder, sudden passions, second-rate intrigue, final sanctity; it's like streaky marble."

"Yes, but how do you *know*," said Perdita vehemently, "how does one ever know what people were like? I'm always finding I'm wrong about people I know—then how is one to understand people one doesn't know like that? Your attitude seems to be to make people what you want them to have been; it's romantic or aesthetic, or whatever you like to call it. It's *wrong*."

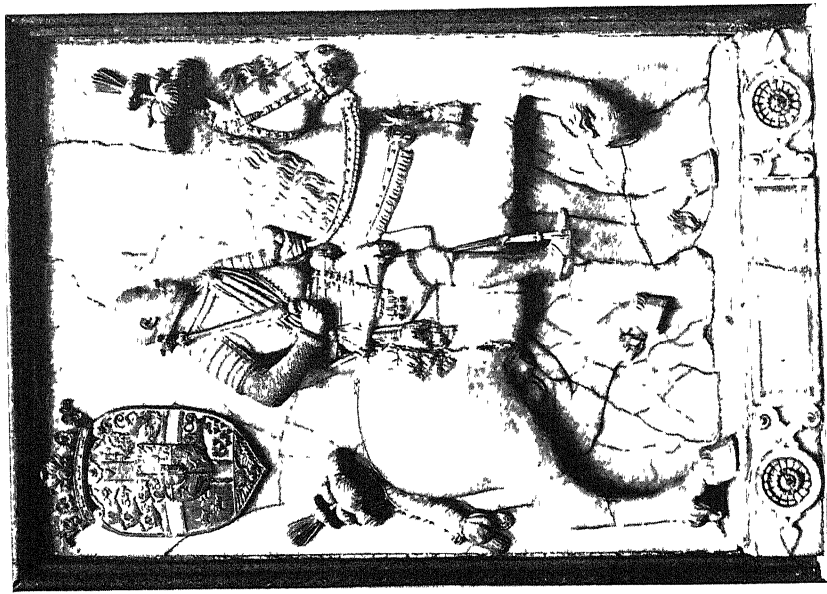
"My attitude," I said firmly, "is to prevent the past from seeming dull; I may not have a scientific mind, or even a strictly historical one; but I like to see people my own way;



23 Thomas Howard, fourth Duke of Norfolk (?)



24 English Alabaster Group of the Resurrection



25 Frederic II of Denmark

*From the original in the Wallace Collection—by permission.*



26 Charles IX of France, by Pilon

*From the original in the Wallace Collection—by permission.*



remember that to me boredom is incomparably the worst thing in life. The first breath of boredom turns me into stone; I can't face it."

The walls of the next room are lined on one side by more cases, this time filled with majolica plates, those brilliant wheels of Italy, rich with yellow and orange, the figures and the arabesques dancing in endless patterns beneath the smooth, glazed surface. On the piece of wall at right angles to these gay tiers of Italian pottery are fixed two alabaster reliefs. One of them is a Nottingham alabaster of the fifteenth century showing the Resurrection, with Christ stepping from the tomb, a cross in his left hand, his right foot on the body of a sleeping guard. Nottingham alabasters have in general a grotesque and *naïf* quality that I find a little repellent; the figures crowded together too compactly, with little or no effort at design, seem ingeniously fitted into the small space as though they were pieces of a child's puzzle. I prefer the second relief on the wall, a very late sixteenth-century equestrian portrait of King Frederick II of Denmark, the father of James I's queen and grandfather of Charles I. The king is in armour and bare-headed, riding to the right, holding a sceptre. The horse carries solemnly upon its head a pyramid of plumes, not unlike the great feather bunches that surmount the canopy of seventeenth-century State beds; more feathers are on his tail, which is encased in leather. The royal arms are in the upper left-hand corner, and beneath a tablet displays a whimsical inscription which translated runs: "*My trust is in God alone, Wilpret is true.*"

I pointed this out to Perdita.

"And who was Wilpret?" she asked.

"I hoped," I said, "that you would ask that. Wilpret, you see, was the King's little dog."

. . . . .

A case of Italian miniatures particularly attracted Perdita, who bent her head low over the glass, peering at the little white-faced saints inside the initial letters cut from

fifteenth-century missals, in their bright robes against backgrounds of sheeted gold. These exquisite figures, recognizing perhaps a delicacy of appearance equal to their own, gazed up at her from their vellum pages, their shimmering nimbus crowning their coloured hair, their hands gesticulating, as it seemed, in welcome. In another case were bronzes, smooth, sinuous Italian nymphs, clumsier Flemish imitations, door-knockers, inkstands, figurines of girls and boys, all shining and held in their positions by the hard substance of which they are made. By the door Mary Queen of Scots in white widow's weeds, mourning for François II, watched us with her lively, queer eyes, the wimple of pleated lawn from which her face looks forth scarcely less pallid than her cheeks. Above the mantelpiece Eleanora of Toledo, the superb daughter of the Duke of Alba, immortalized by Bronzino, stared haughtily down, her hands resting leisurely upon her parapet, her dress of black and white damask vivid in the daylight from the window, her figure sharp against the blue background with its melancholy motto on the falsity of gratitude and the vanity of beauty. Opposite the Grand-duchess of Tuscany, Francis I leered from the tiny panel attributed to Joos van Cleef, and beside him the Emperor Charles V, and a portrait said to show the Protector Somerset as a young man, looked out towards the bronzes and Mary Queen of Scots.

"This room is curiously alive, isn't it?" I said to Perdita, but she was too occupied by the bronzes to reply.

Soon we had come once more to the entrance hall, and walked out into Manchester Square, leaving behind us the gilt world of Riesner and Gouthière, of Limoges enamels and missal illuminations, of Don Balthasar Carlos and the Duke of Norfolk, of the Marquesses of Hertford and their almost fabulous wealth. We crossed a corner of Manchester Square, which seemed more impersonal and grey than ever after our recent expedition down the centuries, and came into Marylebone High Street. Marylebone High Street has a changelessness that in these days is remarkable. With its tributary side streets it has kept, like Dulwich, its nineteenth-century

air. But here it is not the keepsake period that is suggested, rather the 1870's, the era of the Franco-Prussian War. Greengroceries and flower stalls preponderate, bakers' shops and hardware mongers. No one can go the length of the High Street without loitering by the barrows heaped with white lilies and yellow gladioli, tight bunches of anemones (their petals stained unevenly with crimson, and paler red and mauve), mop chrysanthemums like bronze plumes, Cornish violets and rosebuds, in their seasons. The scent of the flowers is heavy in the High Street on a sunny morning, and mixed with it is wafted the warm aroma from the bakery, new bread and currant buns. In the hardware shop you can get sniffs of that elusive but evocative smell compact of sawdust, candles, and new brooms, and in the same shop lie architectural heaps of those gay rosettes of copper-wire destined unworthily to remove the fur from kettles. In my mind hardware shops are linked with a Victorian childhood—Julia Horatia Ewing's *A Flat-Iron for a Farthing* most of all. Although a neo-Georgian child, I read a quantity of Victorian children's books, and these, as Ainsworth later, served to give a definite slant to my outlook. I do not mean that they made me incurably old-world; but through them I emerged from the nursery equipped for life in the 'seventies of the last century, and this pleasing anomaly accounts perhaps for my favourite occupation of pursuing the past, and playing hide-and-seek with my own memories down the corridors of the mind. It is thus that Marylebone High Street seems to me a kind of spiritual home. The careless still-life beneath the greengrocers' awnings, the unordered piles of vegetables, green and red cabbages, tenuous leeks, spinach in leaves, apples and pears, walnuts with a tin shovel lying on them, exotic pyramids of oranges and tangerines, all this gives me more than a merely aesthetic pleasure; it wrenches me back into an age that I never knew, and reminds me of a life I never lived.

## GREENWICH

"IT'S no good," I said to Perdita, "thinking of Greenwich in terms of the Tudors."

"But I don't think of it in terms of the Tudors," she objected, "I don't think of it in any terms, in fact I have never thought of it at all."

"Then it's high time you started," I told her, "Greenwich is the one place in London that can give you the feel of the early Stuarts; the Queen's House, which has been very well restored, is an epitome of the Caroline Age, exquisite, foreign, and frivolous."

"But I thought you didn't like Charles I?"

"I don't like Charles I," I replied firmly, "but even if my personal prejudices had anything to do with our going to Greenwich, which they haven't, I do very much admire the spirit of the fifteen years before the Civil War broke out."

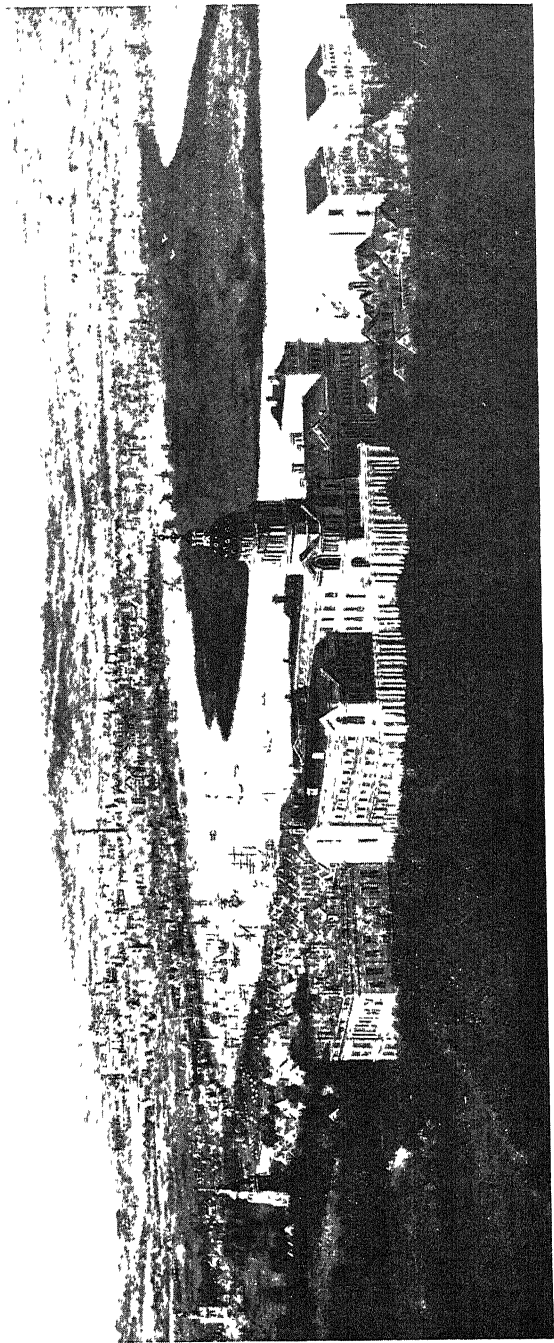
"Isn't it a little precious to say fifteen years have a different spirit to the rest of the century?"

Here the conversation ended. We were on the river, going down towards Greenwich in a motor-boat, under a grey-white sky. We had been to Westminster landing-stage in the morning and, undaunted by the plainness of the weather, got into the half-empty boat. It was one of those days on which the Thames had forgotten all about Whistler. Although it was a summer morning, the air was only luke-warm, and the sky, though lofty, was pale and drab. The thick water lapped heavily against the embankment, swirling slowly round the bridge-piers, and as the boat pushed its way down to Blackfriars an official had begun to shout at us, and our fellow-passengers, through a megaphone. It was all, I felt, a failure. I was bitterly ashamed.

"I thought," I said, after a suitable silence, "that this was



27 The Tudor Palace at Greenwich



28 The View from Observatory Hill, Greenwich, ca 1704, by Jan Griffier,  
showing the new Palace in course of building

*Viscountess Kidley*

going to be such fun; but I'm chilled to the bone already, and it's all going wrong."

Rotherhithe went by, and Wapping Stairs on the other bank where Judge Jeffreys was caught escaping in disguise. I tried to forget the megaphone man and the slums on either hand. Riverside squalor is never, anyway, so very ugly. At Oxford I used to find the slums behind the castle especially comforting. One could wander there wholly undisturbed, looking over the broken iron railings at the bend of the river, across to the gas works and the little obelisk recording a boating accident of the 'eighties. The old wooden jetties of Thames bank have long since gone, but the tumbled buildings remain. The Tower, once huge and impressive, now sits upon its hill like a child's castle from a box of bricks. A cold wind blew in our faces and I wished more and more that we had gone by train. I tried to think of Greenwich Palace as it would have been approached by water three hundred years ago.

Sixteen thirty-nine was a year of great activity at Greenwich. In the new Italianate villa behind the old brick palace, workmen were completing their four years' task. The Queen's House, begun by Inigo Jones for Anne of Denmark in 1617, and left unfinished till 1635, when work was resumed for Henrietta Maria, was designed to bear much the same relation to the sprawling Tudor palace on the river bank as the Trianon did later to Versailles. The palace itself, two stories high, with a gate-house and squat, irregular towers, was set between the Thames and the Woolwich-Deptford high-road, which passed close at the back of it, cutting off the privy garden from the park. It had been a favourite residence of Elizabeth who, although she had never been abroad, was convinced that "the howse, garden, and walks may compare with any delicat place in Italy." Like her father, she had been born at Greenwich. The grandeur of the palace dated from the early fifteenth century when Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, had created it and called it Bella Court. On his sudden death at Bury St. Edmunds, Margaret of Anjou had taken it over, rebuilding parts of the

palace, carving everywhere her daisy emblem, and giving it the new name of *Pleasaunce* or *Placentia*. But in fifteenth-century England it was unwise to expend care or money on a house. Neither Margaret nor her mad, pious husband with his sombre clothes and round-toed shoes, benefited by Placentia long, and within a few years Edward IV and Elizabeth Woodville were holding their court beside the river at Greenwich, rowing up to the water-steps in their barge manned by oarsmen in blue and murrey liveries, sewn with the white Yorkist rose. When this typically Renaissance monarch died the palace was barred to his widow, and ultimately lived in by Henry Tudor and Elizabeth of York. Their son Henry VIII was fond of Greenwich, for from the mullioned windows and the turrets of this ornate brick labyrinth, the tall, top-heavy ships of his cherished navy could be seen passing down the river, their square sails puffed like the cheeks of Renaissance cherubim, the pennons flying and the encrusted gilding of the poop shining above the dark river water. In every way Greenwich Palace was more entertaining than Hampton Court. On one side was the river, on the other the main road, running between wooden palings and spanned by a gate-house from the central room of which travellers could be espied and troop musters in the park observed. It was across this roadway that Raleigh threw his cloak for Elizabeth, who was returning from the park to her garden. Around the palace clustered incidental buildings, chief among them the tilt-yard and the famous armoury where those fine enamelled suits of Elizabethan armour were hammered out by Jacobe, for the Earl of Cumberland, the Earl of Worcester, and the rest.

"One day," I said to Perdita, "we must go and look at the Tower armour. There are some of the suits made at Greenwich there, and it's historically a more interesting collection than at Hertford House."

"I'm not sure if I can face armour," she replied, "but if only one knew something about it one might try. Why don't you know about armour?"



"I've never had time nor, frankly, an overwhelming inclination. But the Greenwich suits are superb, even I can see that."

I returned again to my thoughts about Greenwich in 1639. By then the gate-house over the high-road had been replaced by the villa of Inigo Jones. This square white house, with its balustraded roof, pillared loggia and terrace from which an elaborate Palladian staircase descends, was in its day a great novelty. Contemporaries used the adjective "curious" to describe Inigo Jones's buildings. The banqueting house at Whitehall, built between 1619 and 1622, and the alterations to the Duke of Buckingham's vast sixteenth-century house, New Hall, introduced a new element into English architecture, but when he designed these and the Queen's House, Jones had by no means the unique position in the eyes of his contemporaries which we now know should have been his. To most people he was one among a number of clever architects, and it needed the discerning eye of Charles I to detect his genius. The inside of the Queen's House was as foreign as the outside, with its parapets and glistening lime-washed walls. In 1639 Purbeck paving stones were being laid down along the terrace, statues screwed to their pedestals, wood bases, with bulls' heads and swags of fruit and flowers upon them, carved for more statues about the hall. The black and white marble flooring of this hall had been planned by Nicholas Stone, the sculptor of the Donne monument in St. Paul's, to correspond with the pattern frescoed on the ceiling. In the Queen's own apartments, ceiling paintings by Gentileschi, and canvas panels by Jordeens had been fixed in position. In the flower gardens, planted with flowers sent from Paris by the Queen-Mother, wooden seats were painted blue and green, new stone steps placed for the arbour, a grotto excavated and a fountain with a figure pouring water from a cornucopia placed against a wall. In this year, too, the Queen's new barge was made ready, at a total cost of over four hundred and seventy-five pounds. The Queen probably preferred to come down the river from Denmark House or Whitehall,

rather than to travel a longer distance by the coach-road. By river, Greenwich was five miles from London, by land six from Charing Cross. There was only London Bridge to carry traffic, and this had hindered the expansion of the south part of the city. Under Charles I London was growing at an alarming rate. Following the example of James I and of Elizabeth, though for financial reasons now become obscure, Charles issued a number of proclamations in an effort to limit the city's size. In the fifty years after the Reformation, profiteers had been busy absorbing and exploiting the very considerable lands in and around London formerly held by the Church. Courtiers built vast palaces along the river, and the east became choked with an unplanned mushroom growth of big houses and overcrowded slums. Pestilence, which came usually from Flanders, made havoc of this district during the reign of James I, and soon the move to the west began. The Percies abandoned Northumberland House, which became a gaming-centre, and their flight was symptomatic of a general re-orientation of court life. Under the Stuarts, Westminster became linked to London by a line of houses, and, with the Commonwealth, buildings appeared for the first time in the fields to the west of the Haymarket and St. James's Park.

Simultaneously, an eastward expansion was going on, as Wapping and Ratcliffe docks increased their trade. The population of the city, which at the accession of James I seems to have been about two hundred and fifty thousand, had increased by seventy thousand during his reign, in spite of plagues. A portion of this number could be accounted for by immigrant foreigners, but the majority seems to have been London-born. Jerry-building on commons and open spaces, or in the fields which came right up to the city's edge, was becoming a menace. Two months after he came to the throne Charles issued his first proclamation against this, ordering ornamental pilasters to be placed upon house fronts, and all new construction to be stopped at once. At the same time the traffic problem was now a serious one. Coaches which had first been made in England under Philip

and Mary were extremely popular with the Jacobean rich. In 1613 the Government had attempted to restrict their numbers in the city by suggesting that four hundred and thirty should be the limit allowed. This was far surpassed. The narrow streets were blocked by the unwieldy coaches of the nobility, drawn by four horses, though the drivers of these, it was observed, were more mannerly in giving way than the carters with their seven or eight horses in a line, decorated with tassels and jingling bells. Worst of all were the long covered wagons jolting in from the country with twenty passengers apiece. Many of the thoroughfares were repaved with freestone, the old cobbles being "troublesome" to the feet, and, no doubt, uneven for the coach-wheels. The general chaos in the busy parts of the city was enhanced by the "Hackney Hell Carts," which stood at the Maypole in the Strand and rattled off with their fares down the crowded streets. Sedan chairs, too, were becoming fashionable in the 'twenties and 'thirties, the Duke of Buckingham setting the mode by going in one to Drury Lane. The Thames boatmen began to complain of loss of their lawful custom by the increase in road traffic, and Taylor, the Water Poet, bewailed in 1622 that "all our profit runs away on wheels."

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"From every point of view," I said as we neared Greenwich, "the river must have been the most pleasant way of getting about. Not always safe, but pleasant."

"I should have thought it was very safe," said Perdita, "or did boats upset?"

"Well, with London Bridge choking the river, and the Thames anyhow wider and less organized, storms had a much worse effect than now. I remember a bit in Laud's diary, for instance, about his being nearly drowned."

"Laud," she said, "Archbishop Laud. I've never read his diary."

"I hadn't," I said, "till a few months ago. It's one of the books I've always wanted to read, and the sense of triumph

at having read it at last is colossal. You ought to look at it one of these days."

Laud's diary, consisting of laconic notes of the intrigues and constant difficulties of Caroline political life, is a curiously vivid and anxious document. From it one gets the conviction that whatever else he may have been, ambitious, prejudiced, unjust, he was essentially a sincere and a sensitive man. These daily records of the life of the Arch-Wolf of Canterbury, as contemporary libels called him, give oblique glimpses of the Caroline scene quite as illuminating as those got from the letters of Henrietta Maria or Charles I. The King and Queen used Greenwich Palace in the summer, leading their elegant obstinate existence there beside the river in the months of June and July, acting their intricate roles against the backcloth of statuary and Italian pictures, with the broad, smooth river flowing by and the windows of the old palace blurred by the evening mists. Inconsequent in the foreground struts first the Duke of Buckingham in white satin, and later the French queen, laughing, with a May branch in her hat, her mind preoccupied with chamois leather gloves, the new rules for spellicans, and fruit-trees for the garden of her House of Delight. On some evenings Laud would rumble back to London from Greenwich Palace in the Duke of Buckingham's great coach, talking with his patron of the menace of the priests at Denmark House, the Queen's residence, or of the old Countess of Buckingham's disloyalty to the English Church. But more often he would come and go by water. In October 1638 the dowager queen of France, Marie de Medicis, unwanted in Paris, came to visit her daughter. Her arrival coincided with a spate of ghastly autumnal storms. "The watermen," Laud noted with restrained malice, "call it Q.-Mother weather." A few days after she had come to London, Laud himself narrowly escaped drowning in a "most extreme tempest upon the Thames . . . going from the Star Chamber home between six and seven at night." Five years before, in 1633, when he had just been appointed to the see of Canterbury, the ferry-boat conveying his horses, coach, and

men across to Lambeth, "sank to the bottom of the Thames, being overladen." But the Archbishop did not mind these things, for he was a phenomenally unlucky man and fully persuaded that he was the toy of a malignant fate. Apart from his fearful dreams, ranging from visions of dead friends with wrinkled faces rolling upon the ground, and predicaments such as his being unable to find a service book for the sudden marriage of the King to a minister's widow, to purely horrific omens like seeing the Lord Keeper dead "and rotten already," Laud's waking life was fraught with little accidents. His horse trod on his foot; he was lamed "by the biting of bugs"; he contracted "salt rheums" in his eyes; he fell down in St. John's College, Oxford, hurting his hip; he strained a sinew at Hampton Court and could not walk; he ruptured himself "with swinging of a book for my exercise in private"; worst of all in April 1627, hastening to wait on the King at supper, he tumbled head first out of his coach: "I never had a more dangerous fall."

It is easy to imagine Laud at Greenwich, but it is certainly at Lambeth that one comes closest to him. Here in the lofty gloom of the archiepiscopal palace his spirit lives yet. In the chapel are the stalls he put there, and the floor upon which he walked; in an ante-room to it is preserved his ivory chalice, a turreted fantasy as elaborate and as delicate as his mind. His portrait, the small round face with the waxed chin-tuft, the square black hat and the lawn sleeves, hangs elsewhere in the palace. Most immediately pathetic of all his relics, and revealing a silly aspect that is infinitely endearing, is the shell of a tortoise that the Archbishop brought with him from Croydon in the sixteen-thirties, and which survived in the garden for over a hundred years.

"If you don't mind," I said to Perdita when we had got to Greenwich, "I think we ought first to walk up to the top of the hill, and stand by the Observatory to get the view of the palace and the river. There's a monstrous statue of General Wolfe up there, too, but we needn't take any notice of that."

Standing on the tarmac at the summit, beside General

Wolfe and with the Observatory to our left, we surveyed the park below us, the steep grass slope and the jagged lines of headlong trees, which seemed running post-haste downhill to join the huge leafy chestnuts on the level ground behind the Queen's House. These tilted trees and the intersecting paths beneath the hill, are the remains of an attempt at landscape gardening undertaken by Charles II on plans laid down by Le Notre. The chestnut-trees radiate outwards in irregular formation from the white box of the Queen's House, dark, billowing shapes against the lime-washed walls and the light grass. From where we stood the domed twin towers of Greenwich Hospital were scarcely outlined against the general confusion of roofs, and the chimneys across the river sent up streamers of black smoke into the toneless sky. In the middle distance was the wide reach of the river, a motionless breadth dividing Greenwich from the Isle of Dogs. There was little doing on it. The water, pallid beneath a grey-white sky, did not appear to move, and the brown-sailed rigging of an old ship passing upstream with surprising speed seemed to slide swiftly over the surface of the river like a pirates' galleon drawn across the back of a pantomime stage. Perdita gazed in fascination at this dove-coloured scene.

"I should like to live on this hill," she said; "couldn't one take a room in the Observatory, or take down General Wolfe and put up a house?"

"People used to live up here," I replied; "there was a turreted building called Greenwich Castle."

"Who lived in it?"

"Oh, the keeper of Greenwich Park generally. For a long time rather an interesting man did, Northampton, who was brother of the Duke of Norfolk we saw in the Wallace Collection and another son of the poet Surrey."

The Earl of Northampton, Lord Henry Howard, who for many years lived on the top of Greenwich Hill, was a major figure of the English High Renaissance. His life was long, and a trifle insecure. Born in 1540, the year of Anne of Cleve's marriage and Thomas Cromwell's execution, he died

in 1614 at the age of seventy-five. A crypto-Catholic of considerable wealth, he was considered the most erudite peer of his day. Nearly a decade after his brother's execution he had published a book attacking the popular beliefs in astrology and divination, condemning in tempestuous Elizabethan prose the Devil and all his works, and consigning all astrologers to "the black deepes of hell." "His favours are but fancies," wrote Lord Henry of Satan, "and make no man fat; his glory like a stayned robe which can give no dignity; his service as a net to catch the wind." For this book the author averred that he had been collecting material since he was fifteen; he published it when he was fifty. In spite of this thirty-five years' labour the *Defensive against the poyson of supposed Propheis* did not catch on; indeed the book was never reprinted, and its author found himself temporarily in the Fleet, suspected of concealing treasonable matter amongst his comments on the stars.

When over seventy, Northampton, now an earl, and with a political position of some importance in the Jacobean court, fell under suspicion of connivance in the sordid murder of Sir Thomas Overbury in the Tower. Somerset, who with his wife was convicted of poisoning Overbury, was an intimate of the old Howard earl, and for a moment it seemed as though Northampton would be enmeshed in their disgrace. However, he avoided the abyss of scorn in which the favourite disappeared, and remained serenely on his hill-top, writing cultured, smooth letters to his friends at court suggestive of a halcyon peace of mind. He spoke of his life at Greenwich as passed "in a wilderness," complained that he never heard "any other news of the world than as Amadis de Gaul did in his hermitage," was urbanely "joyful" to hear that the wet summer had not affected Lord Rochester's health, though at Greenwich the ague had been sadly busy near the marsh. In the summer of 1613 Greenwich had been suddenly granted to Anne of Denmark, and Lord Northampton became prey to a flurry of apprehensions. "She will be absolute," a friend had told him of the Queen, and he feared lest he should be "thrust" out of his "little cell in the park of

Greenwich." "In this place I was brought up as a child. I lived many years after I grew up to be a man . . . in this place I would be glad to lay my bones." The Queen had been given Greenwich as the result of a sufficiently Jacobean misadventure. That invaluable gossip, Sir Dudley Carleton, was told in a letter from his friend Chamberlain how it came about. Hunting deer near Theobalds, dressed no doubt in the sporting clothes and high steeple hat of the Van Somer picture at Hampton Court, the indolent Danish queen had "mistooke her mark" and idly killed the King's favourite hound. This was not popular. The King "stormed exceedingly," but on being told who it was that had shot Jewel, he was soon pacified and sent the Queen a diamond worth two thousand pounds as a legacy from the dead dog. This playful mood endured, and by November the King and Queen were on such good terms that he gave her Greenwich into her jointure. This story, illustrative of the happy-go-lucky atmosphere of the Jacobean court, is only rivalled by that of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Doctor Abbot, who was guilty of what Laud called "casual homicide" when he shot a keeper dead at Bramshill.

Down by the river-bank, to the right of the hospital as you look down from the hill, now crouches an enormous power-station. Close against the sheer wall of this power-station is a tiny group of buildings, sheltering a cobbled quadrangle full of shrubs, and entered by a gate-house with a miniature bell-tower. Here live twenty old widowers still fulfilling the conditions laid down by Lord Northampton when he founded the almshouses in 1614. Within the chapel of Trinity College, as it is now called, though at its foundation it was known as Greenwich Hospital, lies the body of the benefactor himself. Despite last century renovations, Trinity College, small, silent, and withdrawn, dwarfed by the power-house on one side and the grandeur of the Wren and Vanburgh palace buildings on the other, retains a remote seventeenth-century character; in many ways it is reminiscent of Jeremy Taylor and the quiet, cultivated divines of his time, with their white surplices and round black skull-caps



and their ornamental sermons and tortuous speculations on Bible texts and their dignified love of God. By the altar of Trinity College Chapel kneels a marble effigy of Lord Northampton in armour, with ruff and Garter mantle, his small hawk-like head tipped towards the ceiling and his hands joined together in prayer. Northampton had originally been buried in the oratory of Dover Castle, but on the decay of this building at the end of the seventeenth century both corpse and monument were removed to Greenwich. In its first emplacement the tomb was possibly more grandiose, for here the folds of his cloak are broken off where the figure is built into the south wall, and the feet are either missing or hidden in the masonry. The little windows of Trinity College command a close-up of the Thames; it is perhaps its nearness to the river, and also, I think, the continuity of its functions, that give to this reminder of past charity its extreme tranquillity.

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"Charles II had the Tudor palace torn down," I told Perdita as we began to walk down the hill. "He was going to put up a magnificent King's House in its place, but it was never finished in his lifetime. It was under William and Mary that it became a Seamen's Hospital to correspond to Chelsea; it was made a naval college quite late in the nineteenth century. When it was a hospital the governor lived in the Queen's House, and those colonnades were added under George III."

We went to the entrance at the end of the right-hand colonnade, and wandered along beneath the arches to the Queen's House. The colonnades cover the track of the old Woolwich-Deptford road. Half-way along we stopped to look again at the river. From here the factory chimneys are hidden by the two great architectural blocks of the hospital, with their clusters of massive pillars streaked with soot, which set fine columnar limits to the view of the river from the Queen's House. This view Queen Mary had insisted on preserving, refusing to permit Wren to construct anything

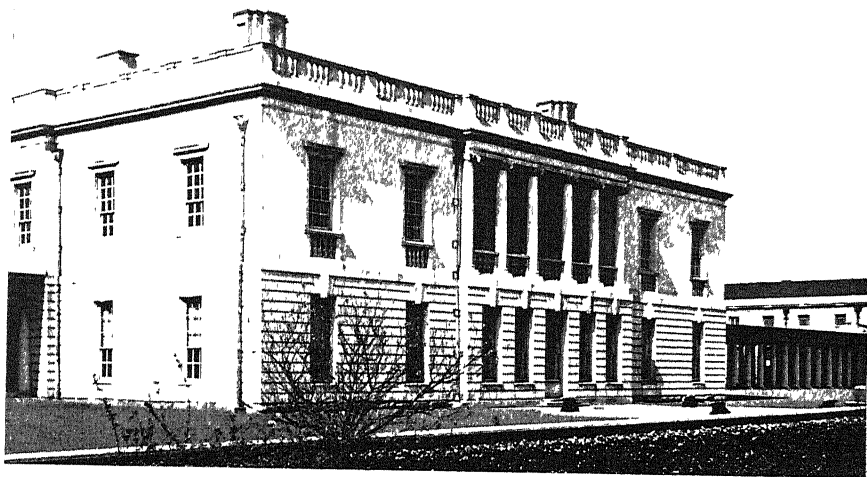
which might block it. It was she who told him he must raise another King's House opposite that built by Webb for Charles II, and the transformation of the projected palace into a Seamen's Hospital was her own idea. The result, with the Vanburgh buildings and the later additions, is majestic enough; too magnificent, thought Dr. Johnson, for a hospital. This impression he conveyed to Boswell one warm July day in the year 1763, when they had rowed down to Greenwich from Billingsgate. Boswell, "much pleased" to find himself at Greenwich with the Doctor, deftly took from his pocket a copy of Johnson's *London* and declaimed to its author the passage descriptive of the place where they now stood:

On Thames' banks in silent thought we stood,  
Where Greenwich smiles upon the silver flood;  
Pleased with the seat that gave Eliza birth,  
We kneel and kiss the consecrated earth.

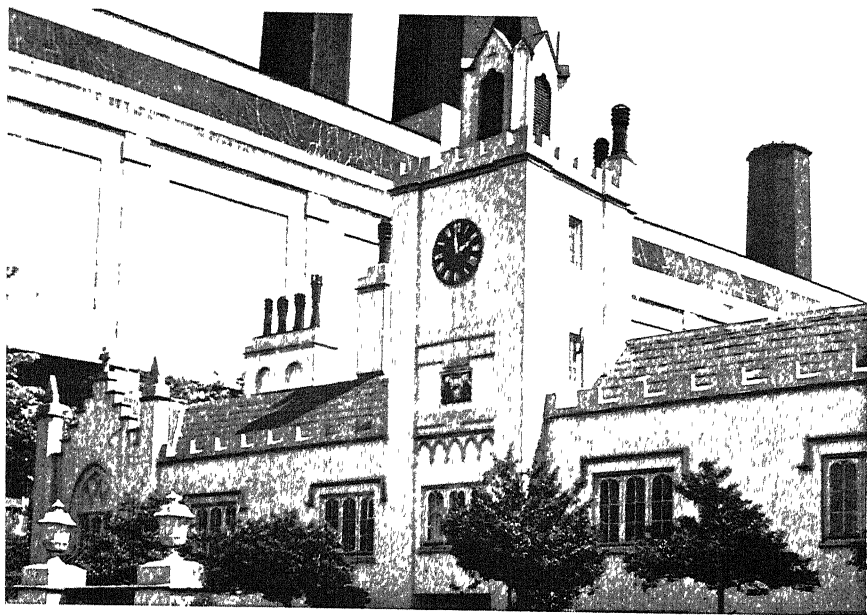
Towards evening they strolled together in the park and Johnson ("I suppose by way of trying my disposition") remarked: "Is not this very fine?" to which Boswell, "having no exquisite relish for the beauties of Nature," answered boldly, "Yes, sir, but not equal to Fleet Street." "You are right, sir," was the reply.

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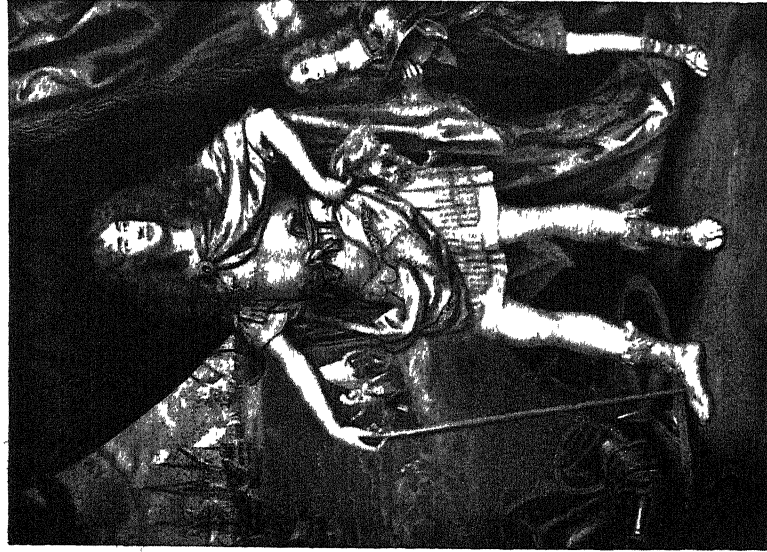
Perdita and I entered the paved hall of the Queen's House and stood upon the floor of black and white marble. This room is a perfect cube; hitched high up on the walls is a painted gallery, and above it was once a painted ceiling. Ten statues once stood here on carved pedestals and probably a number of pictures hung between the doors. The first picture to catch one's eye in the room is now a full-length Mytens of another old Howard earl, Lord Nottingham, who had led the fleet against the Armada, and gone with Essex to Cadiz. As Lord High Admiral under Elizabeth he had kept a famous company of players, of which Edward Alleyn, the founder of Dulwich College, came to be



29 The Queen's House at Greenwich



30 Trinity College Almshouses, Greenwich



31 Portrait of James II

*Royal Maritime Museum, Greenwich*



32 Portrait of Richard Drake

*Royal Maritime Museum, Greenwich*

the head. Nottingham was some years older than his cousin Northampton on Greenwich Hill; he had been born in the same year as Edward VI and died only a few months before James I himself. James I commissioned Mytens to paint this portrait when the earl was already eighty-four; with the gilded frame it cost the King thirty-two pounds. A gaunt old man with a snow-white beard and a skull-cap, Nottingham stands staunchly in his Garter robes by a table draped with a Turkey carpet. Through a window to his left is a seascape with ships.

"I like the convention of having the window and the view," said Perdita, "I think Mytens was rather good, don't you?"

"I think he was really very good," I said, "and maybe he gave a better picture of the Caroline court than Van Dyck, simply because he was a second-rate painter without imagination. Van Dyck romanticized the English court, which anyway revolved in a dream-world. There's a Mytens of Charles I in the next room; we might look at it at once."

In the room once used by Henrietta Maria as a withdrawing room now hangs the Mytens portrait of the King. It is a typical example of Mytens's mechanical work. Between 1620 and 1634 he is known to have painted the King fifteen times at Greenwich; and lists of payments show how busy he was kept, like Allen Ramsay at a later day, turning out royal portraits for presentation to the Duchess of Saxony, the Spanish and Polish ambassadors, the ambassador of the Archduke, the Bishop of London, the Lord Deputy of Ireland, Lord Pembroke, Lord Morton. These portraits conform generally to one type. The King is shown at full-length standing beside a table on which lie a sceptre, an orb, and a crown. In his right hand is a cane, behind him two figured pillars supporting a looped velvet curtain, between the pillars a balustrade and a nebulous "prospect." The King is booted, gloved and spurred, and the only variations occur in the colour of his clothes; at times he is in red, at times in grey or silver. In the Greenwich version he wears

scarlet embroidered with gold, and a circular ruff round the neck in place of the falling collar of a few years later. In these pictures Charles's resemblance to his father James I is very marked, the same large nose and the ruddy complexion, though heavy-eyed and overcast with a melancholy that can have seldom affected the lax and jolly mind of the earlier king.

"You must remember," I said to Perdita as we looked at the other pictures in the room, "that this house is the product of the first English age of connoisseurs. Under Charles I the aristocracy began to collect objects of beauty instead of objects of value."

"But isn't that more or less like Wolsey at Hampton Court? Don't you remember telling me about the things he collected there?"

"It wasn't really at all the same," I replied, "Wolsey accumulated things that were valuable and made a show: chests, cabinets, tapestries, all herded together to impress his wealth and importance on everyone's mind. But with Lord Arundel and Henrietta Maria (who was after all half a Medici) and above all with the arrival of Van Dyck, the connoisseur appeared, and knowledge and taste appeared too. It wasn't only in London; in the country the huge houses built by the Elizabethans and their predecessors began to be renovated and even, in cases, pulled down; and the needlework and gaudy provincial portraits which had once been so interesting and up to date were shoved away to make room for more cosmopolitan things."

"I see," she said, "it was a sort of preliminary revolution before the political one."

"I think it helped the political one on, too," I answered, "for as the court became more precious and foreign, and at the same time more morally strict, it lost its popularity with the city; and the success of English sovereignty depended on the friendliness of London to an incalculable degree."

In the room opposite the Queen's withdrawing room hang several pictures of interest. Perdita and I looked first at a small oblong panel, in the style of Momper, showing the

Tudor palace seen from the park. In the foreground a group of figures gaze out over Greenwich towards London, much as we had just been doing from the hill. To the left is the tower of the hill castle, in the centre the turrets of the armoury and the gate-house, to the extreme right the almshouses built by Lord Northampton. The high road can be seen running straight behind the palace, between wooden palings. This little panorama demonstrates admirably the lie of the old palace against the river and its relation to the roadway and the hill.

"It's curious to have built right on the road," said Perdita, "but I suppose it was something to be near both a river and a road, for communications. Is this a very fine Elizabeth?"

She pointed to the big Greenwich portrait of Elizabeth in mourning in the late 'eighties, with a fair rippling wig and an enamelled oval face. It is one of the most consciously ostentatious of the Queen's portraits. Her bodice and farthingale are black, but two broad strips of jewelled braid, with knots of five pearls alternating with square-cut red and purple stones in gold settings, are sewn down the front. Across this glittering bosom are slung three ropes of pearls, and suspended from them a gold pendant with another large pearl. Her vast full sleeves are of lawn, white embroidered with black arabesques of flowers and leaves, and her ruff is made of finely pointed lace. A gauze cloak is held by wire above her shoulders; in her hair is set a coronet of gold and pearl. The sceptre in her right hand is tipped with a golden fleur-de-lis, and on the finger of her left is a black mourning ring. The flamboyance of this splendid presentation is emphasized by a background of deep green silk damascened with gold, and a chair of cherry-red velvet with gold knobs and a gold fringe.

"I don't see how you can say Van Dyck first romanticized English portraiture," said Perdita, "this is purely romantic."

"Not to my thinking; it's just exaggerated, but in a way people would understand. Its purpose was not unlike that served by the mammoth photographs of Stalin in Russia

to-day; this grandiose picture was simply a crude way of putting Tudor majesty across; you get nothing like it in contemporary France, but then perhaps you wouldn't expect to."

"And do you think it's very much exaggerated?" she asked.

"Not much; I suspect that Elizabeth was in fact just as bedizened and glorious and unreal as she is here; at the end of her reign at any rate."

We next came to the famous portrait of Sir Francis Drake, painted in 1591. He is dressed in black, and about his neck hangs a cord, with the jewel presented to him by the Queen, at the end of it. A terrestrial globe sits on a green-covered table at his side, and his coat of arms, with ornate entangled scarlet mantling, floats in the air to the right of his head.

"Are you interested in Sir Francis Drake?" asked Perdita vaguely.

"No," I said, "the sea-dogs are the one side of Elizabethan life that I can't bear."

"That's odd, isn't it?"

"It's not at all odd; I hate the sea-dogs because I hate anything to do with the sea; I have always hated the sea and ships, and men who went down to the sea in ships, and I always shall."

"I thought this was a maritime museum?"

"So it is, but we needn't go into the next building and look at the ship models, unless you insist; it's a wonderful collection, of course, and the globes are particularly fine and there is a superb Hogarth, but all the same it bores me to death."

"Well, let's finish here first, anyway," she said.

"Look at this picture; don't you think it's tremendous fun?"

I showed her a portrait of Sir Francis Drake's cousin, Richard Drake, which hangs in the same room; he is clad wholly in black armour, with a rope of thin gold chains thrown inconsequently over his right shoulder, his long face framed in a white cambric ruffle, and on his head a tall



black hat with a great bunch of plumes stuck in the side. Above his right shoulder is a helmet surmounted by more plumes, his coat of arms with his motto, "*Tousiours prest a servir*," and the date 1577. It is a flat, stiff, formal portrait, characteristic of the mediocre English school of the day, but though the eyes are crafty and the expression dour, the impression created by the spray of feathers and the tilted chimney hat, the shining dark armour and the slung chain, is one of gaiety and of swagger. Richard Drake, one feels, could cut just the sort of dash demanded by the Elizabethan public of its heroes; it is the spirit of Shakespeare's *Henry V*.

"I once acted in *Henry V*," I said to Perdita.

"Did you," she said, "and what did you act?" One of the nicest things about her is that she does not question irrelevant remarks; she accepts them.

"Two parts; the Archbishop of Canterbury, and then Orleans in the French camp. 'The sun doth gild our armour; up my lords!' I stood in front of the stage, the very front, with an orange spot-light streaming down on my armour; it was very pleasing."

"I see the point," she said with intelligence, "this sort of picture does help with the *Histories*; you're absolutely right."

Richard Drake served as prize-agent to his cousin Sir Francis, taking care of the prisoners from the first Armada ships captured off Plymouth in 1588. These prisoners were conveyed to Wolsey's tower at Esher, bought by Drake from the Earl of Effingham who had had it of the Queen in 1583. The tower may still be seen in the suburb of Esher, all that remains of the palace enlarged by Wolsey after he had given Henry VIII Hampton Court; but it was a damp situation, the house was desolate, and Wolsey, ordered thither after his disgrace in October 1529, fell gravely ill. Whether the Spanish grandees interned there after the Armada found it any more comfortable than did Wolsey is open to question; that their jailer was none of the most lenient is certainly suggested by a glance at the narrow, cunning face of Richard Drake. It was to Richard Drake

that Geoffrey Whitney dedicated the verses "in praise of Sir Francis Drake knight" which he appended to his woodcut of Drake's new crest in his *Choice of Emblems*, published at Leyden in 1586. Whitney's argument was that Drake's achievements far surpassed those of Jason:

Through scorching heate, through coulde, in storms and tempests  
force,

By ragged rocks, by shelves and sands this knight did keep his course:

By gaping gulfes he pass'd, by monsters of the flood,

By pirattes, theeves, and cruel foes, that long'd to spill his blood:

That wonder greate to scape: but God was on his side,

And through them all, in spite of all, his shaken ship did guide,

And to requite his paines, By helpe of power divine,

His happe at length did answere hope, to find the golden mine.

Let Graecia then forbear to praise her Jason bold?

Who through the watchfull dragons pass'd, to win the fleece of gold.

Since by Medeas help, they were inchaunted all,

And Jason without perils, pass'd; the conquest therefore small?

Whitney claimed that his hero had, without a sorceress's aid, brought away "his golden fleece while thousand eyes did wake." Landlubbers and adventurers alike are ordered to "give praise to them that passe the waves, to doe their countrie good:"

Before which sort, as chief, in tempest and in calm,

Sir Francis Drake, by due desert, may wear the golden palm.

Here the perfervid patriotism of the Tudor Age is presented in its most fascinating form.

In the room next that devoted to the Elizabethans hangs a picture which is by far the best example of English sixteenth-century portraiture at Greenwich: a head and shoulders of Thomas Seymour, brother of Queen Jane, uncle of Edward VI, husband of Queen Catherine Parr, the legendary object of Elizabeth's earliest affection, and ultimately a victim of his own careless intrigues and his brother the Protector's curiously detached and unemotional mind. Near Thomas Seymour is an unsatisfactory version of a Holbeinesque Edward VI, with long hair to his neck.

"Edward VI died at Greenwich," I said to Perdita, "and

he lived here a great deal; but there's nothing left of the palace as he knew it, except the cellars."

The death of King Edward at Greenwich Palace in July 1553 was not altogether unexpected. The opening of the New Year had found the King feebler than ever, the swift consumption of the lungs that had followed a double illness of measles and smallpox the year before was patently eating his life away. As he drifted coughing about the palace, or rode with his guards in Greenwich Park, this pallid and opinionated boy, an unhealthy sliver from the royal Tudor tree, must have felt vividly the approach of death. From his windows he could watch the rise and fall of the Thames, the water ebbing about the river-stairs, the high tides which, as he wrote on one occasion to his friend Barnabe Fitzpatrick who was in France, had "overflown all meadows and marshes. All the Isle of Dogges, all Plumstead Marsh, all Sheppey Foulness in Essex, and all the sea-coast was quite drowned." As his last spring advanced the King appeared to rally, and Northumberland, writing from Greenwich in May, informed Cecil that "Our Sovreigne Lord doth begin very joyfully to increase and amend." He was able to attend the treble marriage of the Ladies Jane and Catherine Grey, and of Northumberland's own child Catherine Dudley, at Durham House, lending Frances Brandon and her two daughters brocades and jewellery from the royal stores. But by mid-June his death was imminent, and it was with confidence predicted he would not see August in. Northumberland deftly persuaded the King to command the illegal deed of succession for Jane Grey to be drawn up, and throughout June rumours of the King's death ran hither and thither through the city. To still these murmurings it is said that Edward was propped up at a window of Greenwich Palace on July 4; and the sight of his inanimate and bloated face convinced the onlookers that they had been shown a corpse. His finger-nails, people said, had come away from his fingers, his hair had fallen off; and when at last he did expire on July 6, in the arms of Philip Sidney's father, the worst storm that had devastated England for

many years was crackling above the palace and lashing up the turgid waters of the Thames. At midday it was as dark as midnight; while the King lay unconscious in his great bed at Greenwich Palace, his sister Mary was waiting anxiously at Hunsdon for news of his death. When, after the Dudley interregnum, she was firmly established on the throne, the new queen ordered an autopsy on the body of her brother, which had lain almost forgotten at Greenwich during the hectic nine days; her physicians promptly pronounced the late king poisoned, an improbable finding which satisfied public opinion, and perhaps aided those nineteenth-century historians who tried so hard to fit the halo of a martyr about the long and narrow head of this odious royal boy.

. . . . .

As we went up the spiral staircase leading to the second floor, Perdita stopped with her hand on the iron rail, with its exquisite design of curling tulips. She stood there a moment at the turn of the stairs, a fair, distinguished figure, well attuned to the surrounding elegance:

"I agree with what you said in the boat," she remarked, "this place exudes the Stuarts, and it explains them."

She turned and tripped quickly up the rest of the steps, to the gallery round the hall. Leaning upon the balustrade, we peered over, down at the white and black marble of the hall and at the windows with their distant view of the river.

"The funny thing is, though," I said, "or perhaps it's not funny at all, that this was the first English palace in which George I set foot. He came here from Gravesend when he landed in the autumn of 1714. It's odd, isn't it, that this completely Stuart place should have been chosen for the reception of that incredibly un-Stuart old German."

It was on September 18th, 1714, that George I came to Greenwich, where the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lords Justices, and much of the nobility awaited him. After innumerable delays at Herrenhausen and The Hague, the

new king had been persuaded to cross the Channel; his ship anchored off Gravesend in an inauspicious fog, and it was not till the next afternoon that the portly and unattractive foreigner who was now King of England, landed on English soil. He protested that he did not want to wait at Greenwich till the preparations for his solemn entry into London were completed; he wished to go straight to St. James's without ceremony, but this was not permissible. On the morning of Monday the 20th the coaches of the nobility could be seen lurching at daybreak into Greenwich Park; ten o'clock was the latest hour for their arrival, and the Officers at Arms were early occupied in ranging the great cumbrous carriages into the correct order of precedence. Each coach was drawn by six horses, and in all two thousand people moved off towards London in procession that fine autumn morning. At Southwark the King stopped to hear the city's welcome read by the Recorder, Sir Peter King, and to receive the "duty and loyalty" of the Lord Mayor and the Corporation. Here too the procession was swollen by the addition of the city officers, a detachment of the Artillery Company, the Knights' Marshals men, the King's Kettle Drums and Trumpets, the Heralds, the Sergeant-at-Arms, the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, and Yeomen of the Guard. The roads from Greenwich to London had been repaired for the occasion, the streets cleaned, carts and drays cleared off the processional route; hackney coaches were forbidden after midday, and no carriages or coaches allowed to stand by the roadside. Slowly and noisily the new king was brought in triumph to St. James's, and crowned in the Abbey within a month. George was gutturally amazed at the crowds that lined the route; it made him think, he afterwards confessed, of pictures of the Resurrection; and Lady Cowper swiftly answered, "Sir, it is our political resurrection!"

"Let's forget about George I," said Perdita; "the very idea of the Hanoverians casts a hideous gloom. Unlike you, I begin to be very much attached to the Stuarts."

"Then we can look at one picture that sums them up,"

I replied, "summing up is so important, isn't it; I'm always looking for syntheses."

A small upstairs room in the Queen's House is wholly dominated by a huge heroic full-length of James II, painted about the year of his abdication and ascribed to Willem de Keyser. The King is wearing a toga, with a corselet, an enveloping embroidered mantle trailing the ground behind him. On his head is a great grey periwig, with its myriad thick curls falling about his shoulders. One hand is on his hip, the other, the arm regally outstretched, holds a staff. On his legs are jade-green buskins, with winged lions' heads; his feet are encased in jewelled sandals, his toes bare. At his back is the expected curtain, to his right the seashore with riding men and high, proud ships with pennons flying; at his left a page runs up with a plumed helmet in his arms. Along the top of the picture golden swags with tassels hang from the curtain edge. It is as much the colours as the grandeur of conception that give this portrait such a peculiarly romantic quality; they are pale and bright, reds, oranges, greens, greys.

"That," said Perdita, "is so much the most exciting thing we've seen here that I can't think why you didn't show it me straight away."

"I kept it till now," I replied, "because it shows you what happened to the Stuarts; it is the logical conclusion of Henrietta Maria, divine right, the Queen's House, autocracy and that dangerous foreign touch; when you have seen this you know for ever why James II could not keep the throne, why even William III seemed preferable to English people; Mary and Anne were *bonnes bourgeois* in comparison, and therefore perhaps acceptable; but in this picture you get not only the preposterous apex of Stuart pretensions, but also the seed of the glamour that surrounded the Old and the Young Pretender in the next century. Do you see what I mean?"

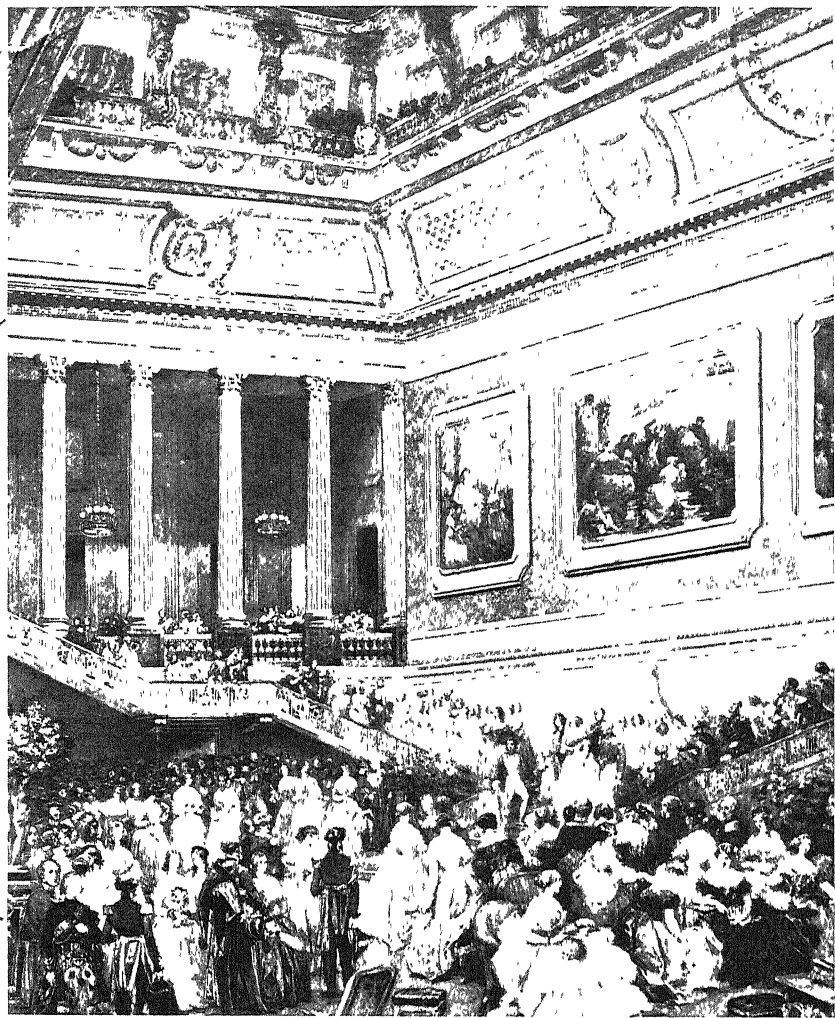
"Of course I do," she answered, "but are you sure? I mean, aren't you putting too much into too little, is there really any basis for your theory at all?"

“That’s what’s such fun,” I said, “making theories on tiny bases, like inverted pyramids. And after all half the theories about the Stuarts are equally tenuous; at worst, all I have done is to make what Lord Northampton would have called another net to catch the wind.”

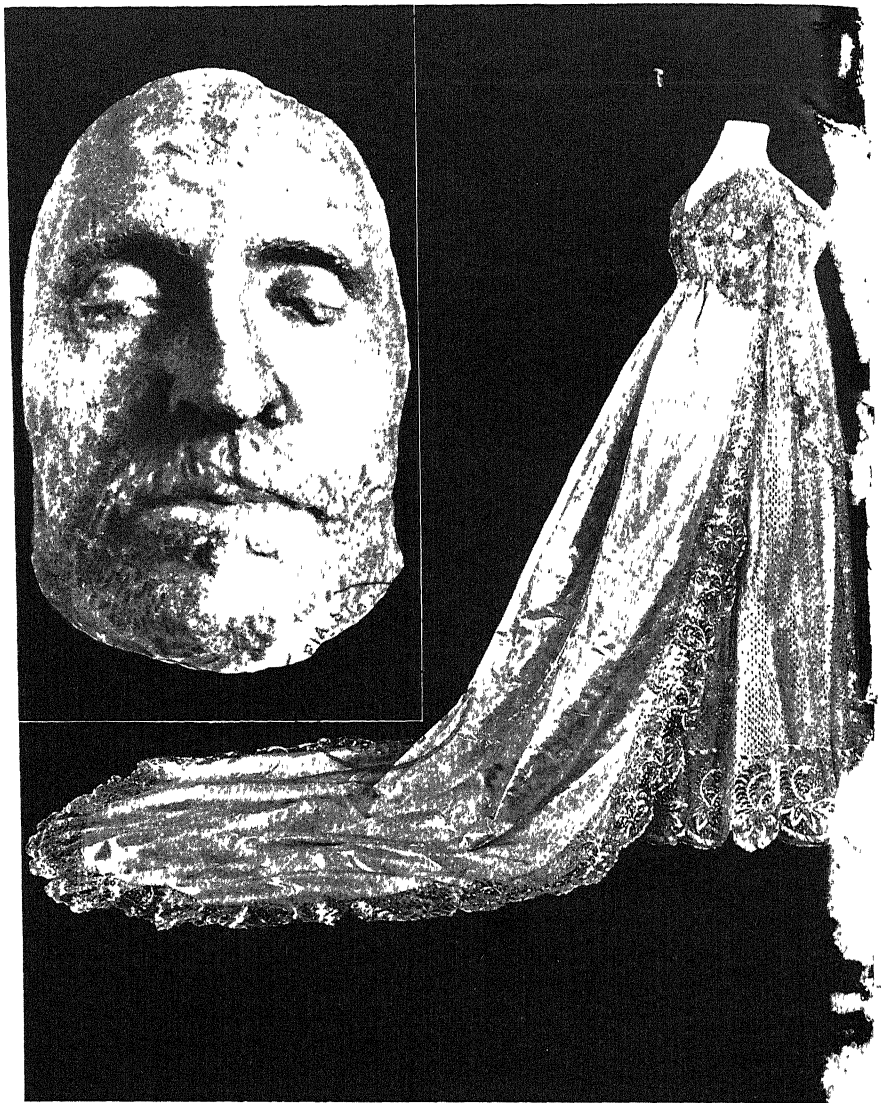
## STAFFORD HOUSE

SOME days after we had been to Greenwich, Perdita and I were walking across the bridge in St. James's Park. We were on our way to the London Museum at Stafford, or as it is now called, Lancaster House. In some sense it was an intrusion that we should be together in that park. Like a number of places in London it is reserved in my mind for someone other than Perdita, an older friend of mine and of a different generation. Week after week I have walked with her in St. James's Park, talking of religions and the trees. Serene and certain, she moves through the modern world like an angel from the façade of Chartres Cathedral, bringing with her the aroma of the Middle Ages, the time of faith and strong devotion, that holy joy with which one side of medieval life brimmed. To be with her is to be calmed, enriched, encouraged and amused; for her as for Balzac's Louis Lambert, space and time do not seem to exist. When we are both in London we meet constantly; when she is locked away in the blown solitudes of a Gothic revival castle near the Berwick coast, we exchange letters every week. Original without effort, there is no one whom it is more fascinating to be with. Deeply read in Indian mysticism, a student of Plotinus, a friend of A. E., she adds constantly to the riches of her own personality; like all mystics and people of high spiritual perceptions, solitude is essential to her. At one time Battersea Park would be the scene of our discussions, but for the last year St. James's, with rice-paper ducks and the sheeted water, the ornamental geese, tall trees, and flowering shrubs, has been our beat. At the palace end of the park are two weeping willows, close against the balustraded bulwark of the pavement above; these we have appropriated for our own. When we first found them, in early spring, their bent sprays carried rows of wan green





33 A Reception at Stafford House in the 'Forties, by Eugène Lam



34, 35 Cromwell's Death Mask, and Princess Charlotte's Wedding D.

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*London M*

buds, like pale stones set apart upon a necklace. In the summer we would stand and wonder at them become viridian cascades like coloured rain. In the autumn, however, they went bad on us, turning yellowish and untidy, their leaves the consistency of hay. In the winter they are drooping skeletons, bare-boned and waiting for the spring. A.E.'s beliefs in tree spirits and in the perfection of each separate berry and leaf are one of the topics of our conversation, and over and over again our talk is interrupted to examine, like a schoolchild's nature walk, though with different intentions, a spray, a flower, or the arrogant bulk formed by the foliage of a tree. If trees seem more beautiful in a suburb such as Dulwich than in the open country, their effect is redoubled in a London park. So it seemed a little wrong to be traversing St. James's Park with Perdita. I am a romantic, and associations play an enormous part in my conscious mind. A portion of my exaggerated infatuation for London comes, no doubt, from a species of deliberate ego-centricity.

"You see," I said to Perdita, "it's like reading one's memoirs instead of writing them. I call it self-extension. If you have a good memory no walk or bus-ride in London is ever dull. Each street and park and square has probably played some part in one's life, and every bit of London recalls something to my mind. Either incidents of childhood or adolescent crises, or stray contacts or conversations, or people one has forgotten. Yeats's belief that nothing one does ever disappears explains partly what I mean, though he didn't intend it that way. Of course this subjectivity has its disadvantages, and to some people it seems contemptible and mad; perhaps it is."

"But it's better to be mad than objective, isn't it?" she said.

I didn't answer, because I do not know.

Soon we were inside Stafford House, standing at the base of the great staircase and staring up at the gold stucco of the ceiling. The central hall, with its coloured marble panels and the green fluted pillars supporting the gilded roof, is

one of the stateliest of English mid-nineteenth-century creations. For this reason the present display of the museum's contents seems especially unimaginative. Many of the exhibits are in themselves of great interest, but so unappetizingly are they set out, and so haphazardly selected, that it needs careful scrutiny to realize that there is much at Stafford House beyond the well-known collection of clothes. More interestingly sorted, the contents could emphasize both the solidity of London's background and the constant importance, strategic and cultural, of the city. Perdita and I began dully on the ground floor, flitting through the dusty cases of Roman axes and adzes ("You couldn't get anything much duller than an adze, could you?" she said), pottery and tiles. It is hard to get up much enthusiasm about Roman England, at least I find it so. Agricola, the Trinobantes, the legionaries of the Emperor Hadrian, leave me unstirred. Roman remains need either a romantic situation (with the aspect of an eighteenth-century engraving) or a mantle of flowers, grasses, nettles, and red ivy to give them glamour in my eyes. Of course there are exceptions. The noble grey-brown length of Hadrian's Wall, stretched like a flexed ribbon across the bleak northern counties, in some places firm and tall, in others an elongated hump beside a main motoring road, is a sight which, I think, one does not forget. But mosaic floors at St. Albans, or villa-foundations turned up by a ploughshare in Somerset are devastatingly unexciting. London under the Romans, however, is quite another thing, and Stafford House contains one or two objects which remind a Londoner of chapters of the city's past which one is apt to ignore. A plain little jug of brown earthenware, dating from the first century, bears scratched upon its surface the words LONDINI AD FANVM ISIDIS, and a later relief shows a Mithraic sacrifice of a bull; there is the head and torso of a Roman river-god found somewhere in the city, and a strange small piece of lead inscribed with a curse. These hints of London in the power of alien deities, the goddess of the Nile setting up her temple in

Southwark, the Persian Mithras with his mystery cult beloved of the Roman armies of occupation, the Thames ruled by the hoary river-gods of Italy, set sinister shadows slanting across the city's origins. Devoted as I am to London, I like sometimes to let its history pass my mind, in the form of the jerky series of pictures, indistinct and uncertain, which events read of but unexperienced inevitably take. As I wander sometimes along Thames Street or over one of the bridges I try to recreate the Roman city, or the huddled Tudor houses, with their narrow streets and overhanging upper stories, and the crowded jetties and the wharves. Roman London is particularly difficult, and I never get much farther than hazy pictures of lumbering spike-wheeled chariots, great open galleys with tiers of oars moving down the Thames, low white houses and muddy river-banks.

Later periods seem easier; the medieval scene continuing unchanged for many centuries, teeming monasteries and the churches building, gold diadems about the temples of pale, bearded kings, life as coloured and contorted as a Nottingham alabaster, turmoils of foreign wars, turmoils of popular risings, turmoils of the plague, the supreme turmoil of the Wars of the Roses. And then I think how all this erupted into the Tudor monarchy, the coronation pageants at street corners, Anne Boleyn returning from her crowning through unapplauding crowds, Renaissance fountains spouting wine, the Emperor Charles V at Bridewell Palace, Wyatt's men fighting at Charing Cross, the alarums and the gold-thread grandeur of Elizabeth, the Armada Panic, the Essex rising, and the old queen's sombre funeral procession to the Abbey tomb. Later still comes the laxity of Jacobean London, the lottery scandals and Overbury's murder, merging into the cat's-cradle of the Civil Wars, solved by the fragile figure on a scaffold at Whitehall early one January morning, and the heavy ceremonial of His Highness the Lord Protector. And then I hear the pealing bells of the Restoration, and see the bonfires welcoming monarchy's return; and the more lurid glow of six years later, acrid clouds of smoke along the

river-side and the Gothic tower of the cathedral sinking in a bank of orange flame. How sharp a break in the City's history the Great Fire constituted is hard to estimate; certainly more was lost than the actual buildings, and the new London of Wren, paving the way for the level streets and classical houses of the Georgian era was spiritually as far from the Tudor city as the court of Charles II from that of Henry VIII. Regency London is still in part before our eyes, and though daily it disappears and is transformed into a tawdry imitation of Fifth Avenue, we can still look on many buildings that the Prince Regent knew, and see houses up whose steps Lord Byron limped. Victorian London, the city of Mrs. Norton and Thackeray and Dickens, from which the Brownings eloped and to which the startled Brontë sisters came, is again more easy to reconstruct. But, as I have said, the age of Queen Victoria and the Princess of Wales, ringlets and bonnets changing to high-piled hair and spotted veils, the Crimean War and Mafeking Night, is to me unreal and far away. Yet it was just this era of ripe prosperity and arbitrary whim that gave birth to Stafford House; and even more than Hampton Court, the London Museum needs some imaginative consideration of its former splendours to do it justice. It is hard to recognize in the big dusty rooms of glass cases, and the walls spotted with fire extinguishers and engravings, the Veronese grandeur of a Victorian ducal palace, "not unworthy," wrote Disraeli, "of Vicenza in its best days."

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The site of Stafford House was occupied, during the eighteenth century, by a building erected by the architect Kent as a library for Queen Caroline. George II's queen, to whom we owe the timely discovery of Holbein's portrait drawings, which she had the taste and sense to frame and hang in her apartments at Kensington Palace, died in the year her library was completed, 1737. For the rest of the century it was used as a lumber-room, until the year of Waterloo when the Duke of York's library was moved into

it. It was most probably this change that brought Kent's building to the Duke of York's notice; liking the site, so near the Green Park and the Mall and St. James's, he commissioned Wyatt to put up there a house suitable for a royal residence, but he himself died before making use of it, and after some hesitation the Crown lease was sold to the first Marquess of Stafford, subsequently given a dukedom and his wife's title of Sutherland. Lord Stafford had been ambassador in Paris during the Revolution, and his wife had sent some of her own and her son's clothes to the Temple for the benefit of Marie Antoinette and the Dauphin. It was on the death of the first duke that Stafford House fell under the splendid and beneficent sway of his son's wife, Harriet, a daughter of the Earl of Carlisle. Outstanding in her own day for her beauty, generosity, and philanthropy, the second Duchess of Sutherland is far and away the most fascinating figure of the Victorian Whig aristocracy. The close friend of the Queen and of Lord Shaftesbury, a leader of the cultivated world of her day, genuinely sympathetic and unpatronizingly helpful to the poor, yet aiding her husband to lavish his money upon the creation of their great houses at Cliveden, Lillieshall, Trentham, and Dunrobin, she was the fine flower of that paradoxical age. "My true, dear, and constant friend," wrote Lord Shaftesbury at her death in 1868, "ever ready to give her palaces, her presence, her ardent efforts for the promotion of anything that was generous, compassionate, and good." The tale of the Spital-fields weavers, who came to the great hall of Stafford House in 1859 to beg the Duchess's aid for their stagnating trade, is well known; how they brought with them silk of a new colour which they asked her to wear, calling it Magenta after the battle in the Franco-Austrian War; how she wore it, made it fashionable, and at least temporarily saved the looms. A small fragment of this purple silk is exhibited in the London Museum to-day. It was during the life of Harriet Duchess that the prestige of Stafford House was at its height. Balls and receptions and assemblies: the great staircase on which Perdita and I were standing surging with

a throng of eminent Victorians, crinolines and muslin scarves, jewels, fans, flowers in the hair, lilting waltzes from the ballroom, the Duke and Duchess, he ageing and deaf with his whispered passion for the dead Queen Louise of Prussia, she upright and exquisite, standing where we now stood on the staircase landing to welcome their superb guests. Sometimes the small demure figure of the Queen with Prince Albert beside her, would be there at the top of the stairs; sometimes the staircase would empty as everyone crowded to hear an Italian singer in one of the rooms above, or to eat "on their legs," as the Dowager Duchess called it, the cold suppers and "luxuriant dessert." Lord Grey had to be taken into supper, and then, the Duke of Wellington after the concert. The elder Lady Salisbury would be "promenaded up the stairs" on the arm of a distinguished foreigner and a sit-down table must be prepared for the Duchess of Cambridge, and sofas reserved for the Carlises, Lady Pembroke and Lord Clanwilliam. With the furniture gone, the walls mostly bare, an old red carpet on the staircase, it is pathetically hard to recreate these scenes of feudal elegance, to imagine that shimmering world moving to and fro to the strains of Rossini, translucent in the "gas-lighting from the outside of the lantern," dining in the room above the portico under the great suspended chandelier of glass fashioned to resemble white lilies among green leaves, and holding a myriad candles.

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But the most spectacular of all the pageants for which Stafford House provided the décor, was the famous reception of Garibaldi. In April 1864 the victor of Aspromonte, freshly wounded from that battle, "a convalescent as well as a conqueror," landed at Southampton from the Peninsular and Orient steamer *Ripon*. His cause, which had at first seemed but "a storm in the South" to the majority of English people, had quickly acquired popularity over here—"one who has used war only as a means of promoting the best interests of civilisation," the *Illustrated London News*



called him, and indeed the man in the scarlet shirt and grey cloak had become in English minds a symbol of nobility and freedom. Coincident with Garibaldi's arrival in England came news of the brutal Prussian bombardment of Sonderburg in the German-Danish War, and public opinion in this country, already naturally biased in favour of the Danes, was revolted by this new exhibition of the incorrigible inhumanity of Prussia. The diplomatic rebuff (that "it was not usual for a neutral power to inquire into the conduct of belligerents") administered by Berlin to the British note of protest, is unpleasantly reminiscent of more recent German behaviour. But if Germany was then regarded by some sections of English opinion with something of the suspicion with which she is to-day, Italy, as represented by Garibaldi, was wildly favoured. His reception by all classes was formidable. "The Premier has been closeted with him, the Laureate has hastened to take his hand, and it is said that Royalty itself designs to meet him." More satisfying than these marks of privileged distinction must have been the tumultuous popular joy at his arrival. After a rest in the Isle of Wight (it was during this that Lord Tennyson had hastened to take his hand, advancing with his wife and children from the beflagged portico of his house, clad in a long cloak, his arms outstretched, as graphically shown in an engraving for the *News* by Mr. Jackson) Garibaldi returned to Southampton, where he was met on the pier by the Mayor and Corporation, with an open landau drawn by four grey horses, and other carriages to escort him to the station. The train, which was in the charge of Mr. Ralph Dutton, M.P., consisted of seven carriages, and the engine bore a trophy of Italian flags. As it passed smoothly through the level English countryside, villages and cottages emptied, country people lining the permanent way to catch a glimpse of the carriage containing Garibaldi, waving handkerchiefs and flags as he went by. Trees and roof-tops were scaled, chairs dragged from houses, everywhere signs of the spontaneous enthusiasm of the English welcome. At Winchester the residents crammed the station as the train stopped for the

presentation of an address by the Mayor of the city; a brass band blared out Garibaldi's Hymn (which was selling in London at half-crown a copy, with suitable English words). All this was a mere foretaste of what was to come. As the train neared the metropolis the wayside watchers became more frequent, their numbers greater. Nine Elms station itself was thick with people, men and women standing on trucks in the siding, on carriages, piles of timber, luggage, pieces of furniture. Word went round that the train was approaching; and amidst cries of "Hats off!" the band struck up the hymn; yells and huzzas greeted the appearance of the flagged engine, and Garibaldi, always in his red blouse and grey cloak, stepped down on to the platform amidst a deafening clamour of cheers. Bewildered and exhausted, he walked slowly up the platform to the dais, pressing the hands of ladies as he went, murmuring broken words of gratitude in English, and smiling his melancholy smile. A little girl rushed forward with a bouquet; scarcely glancing at the flowers he caught her up in his arms and kissed her; the crowd went mad with approval. After replying to the address of the City Corporation, and listening to the impromptu speech of an excited woman compatriot who dashed up on to the dais and could not be restrained, Garibaldi entered the Duke of Sutherland's carriage for the three-mile drive to Stafford House. The sun was shining brightly as the procession left the station, shining on the carriages and on the waving banners of the workmen's deputations and the Friendly Societies, the Sons of the Phoenix, and the Bands of Hope. All down the Vauxhall Road the crowds roared their welcome, every window and house-top bright with waving scarves and bobbing faces. The horses plunged and reared in terror, and in Pall Mall the rumble, with two of the Duke of Sutherland's footmen, came right off; later the whole carriage, subjected for hours to the unwonted pressure of ten thousand bodies, fell to pieces in the coach-house during the night. Trafalgar Square was packed with people, even the statue of Charles I had men clinging to it, one sitting boldly pillion behind the monarch,

his hands clasped about the royal neck. As the triumphal procession reached the Houses of Parliament the sun was sinking over the river, and it was not till eight o'clock in the early spring darkness, that Garibaldi arrived at Stafford House. He limped up the red-carpeted stairs on his host's arm, the Duchess and her mother-in-law the Duchess-Countess, advancing to meet him just within the hall. The following days were a whirl: addresses, meetings, receptions, speeches at the Crystal Palace, drives to see Italians in St. John's Wood, lunch with the Dowager Duchess at Chiswick, breakfast at the Reform Club, a visit to Lord Palmerston, a call on Miss Nightingale in Park Street. More magnificent than anything else was the evening reception in the long gallery at Stafford House, the great Whig ladies in their tiaras, leaning swan-like forward in diaphanous crinoline dresses for a word in Italian with the Patriot, the gentlemen in black mingling amongst them looking, as Dr. Waagen said of another assembly at Stafford House, like a flight of crows among gay-coloured birds. When at last Garibaldi went from London, tired and ill, weighed down with golden boxes and illuminated addresses, swords, mementoes, and marks of affection and esteem, he took with him the heart of London, if such a corporate entity exist. He left behind him at Stafford House a slipper worn after he was wounded at Aspromonte. Immediate memories of his visit were possibly effaced by the bacchanalian festivities over the Shakespeare Tercentenary in the same month. The high-point of these proceedings was unquestionably the banquet in the pavilion at Stratford (at which the Duchess of Sutherland's brother proposed the toast) the long tables embellished with little casts of Shakespeare's bust, and appended to each item on the lengthy menu an apt quotation from one of the Immortal Plays: "*Duck*—oh, dainty duck!" *Midsummer Night's Dream*, v. 7.

Once, in Newcastle, I found a curious relic of the Garibaldi cultus in England; a glass case containing a figurine of Garibaldi, standing beside his horse, cut out in paper and dressed in a scarlet plush shirt and grey trousers; this case,

which I bought for five shillings, is now kept on a bookcase in my room.

"It's nearly impossible to realize the life that went on here," I said to Perdita. We had finished with Roman remains, and stood on the staircase, looking up at the caryatides in the roof. "What incredible people the Victorians were. And it wasn't only the parties, but anti-slavery meetings, reform agitations and all the other Whig things, and then oddments like the wicker coffins."

"What would they be?" she asked.

"The Earth to Earth Burial Exhibition," I answered, "held in the gardens here in June 1875. It's not quite credible, but it's true."

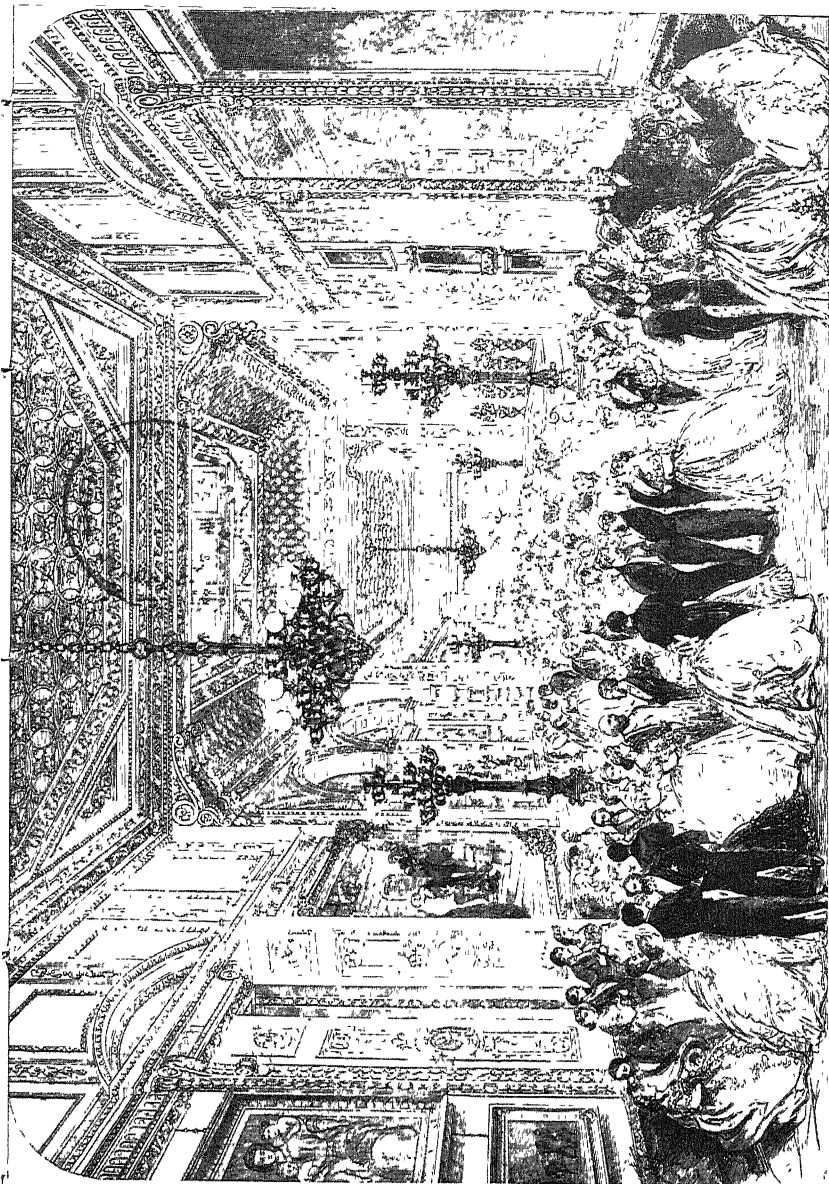
This Earth to Earth Exhibition I had found described in an illustrated weekly of the day, together with three engravings of wicker coffins, as advocated by Mr. Seymour Haden. The coffins were laid in rows in the garden, and the public was allowed in on Thursday and Saturday to see them. Explanatory handbills were distributed; "the models shown are merely suggestive . . . the majority of them do not as yet fulfil the conditions essential to their practical use. The mesh in most of them should be larger than it is, and as open as is consistent with . . . the perfect retention of their contents." They were to be made of "light, strong, perishable, inexpensive materials," and the meshes filled in with "the larger ferns, mosses, lichens, herbs, fragrant shrubs, and any of the conifers; willows or evergreens. . . ." Large numbers of people flocked to see the coffins, discussing perhaps the comparative merits of the large and the small mesh, the "light and simple framework" of a model bier, the importance of a narrow lead band "pierced with name and date of death, to be passed round the chest and lower limbs" for "subsequent identification of the bones." It is one of the rare suggestions of the Tudor mentality in that cosy and impregnable Victorian world.

We went quickly through the first two or three rooms; they contain little of real interest, except a Nonesuch chest, one of those late Elizabethan coffers of inlaid wood with panoramas of the towers and dormer windows of the Tudor palace. A set of green and white chessmen given to Samuel Pepys by the Duke of York relieves the general sadness of these rooms somewhat, and a folded sheet, relic of the 'Fifteen, reminds one of what was possibly the most wholly romantic episode of our eighteenth-century history. I showed Perdita this object, which lies folded in its case, embroidered with an elaborate floral pattern and sewn with the inscription: "The Sheet off my dear, dear Lord's Bed in the wretched Tower of London, February 1716. Ann C. Darwent-Waters." I have always been deeply prejudiced against the cause of the Old and the Young Pretender, and consequently against its martyrs. By an inverted snobbery I hate the cheapening glamour which has been woven about their names, the miniatures and drinking-glasses, screws of hair and scraps of clothing. The pious unreality of the court at St. Germain-en-Laye seems stupid and wrong-headed. Yet I find that when one comes actually to read contemporary accounts of Mary Beatrice and her son, and of their disciples, it is impossible not to be stirred by the sanctity and high-mindedness of these treasurers of a lost cause. Of all the Jacobites the most attractive is unquestionably the third Earl of Derwentwater. Twenty-six when he was executed, he had been brought up at St. Germain, a cousin by his mother to the Stuart sovereigns themselves. Dilston Hall, the Northumberland house near Hexham, celebrated in the ballad *Lord Derwentwater's Goodnight*, is now a ruin, and little else is left to recall Francis Radcliffe's gallant piety save some few letters, the clothes he wore on the scaffold, and this sheet embroidered with his widow's own hair. Like all those who have died for their beliefs, Lord Derwentwater commands respect; added to this in his case must come some modicum of admiration, as he ascends the serge-draped scaffold, dressed in black velvet, a gold reliquary in the shape of a cross at his neck, upon his

head a black beaver hat with a plume, and a wig of bright flaxen curls. Attended by three duchesses and many other ladies, his wife had approached the guttural Hanoverian king, to plead for her husband's life as George I returned from chapel; but after some wavering the King rejected her plea, and the prisoner, who had spent his time in meditation, and reading that unpalatable book, *St. Augustine's Confessions*, under the guidance of the Jesuit Father Pippard, was given no reprieve. He was offered life on the scaffold if he would deny the Catholic faith and the rights of James III; but saying that "life on these terms would be too dear a purchase," he turned, walked to the black railings of the scaffold, read a short address to the crowd, and lying down at the block cried out three times, "Dear Jesus, be merciful to me." The axe severed his head at the first blow, and buried itself in the wood; and according to the words of the attendant Jesuit, "the vast multitude . . . seemed to give a groan not unlike the hollow noise of the sea." His body, wrapped in a black cloth, was quietly conveyed northwards to Dilston Hall; in 1807 an old woman of Colliers End, who died at the age of one hundred and five, could recollect coming out into the highway to see the little cortège pass. As the body came towards Dilston the *aurora borealis* suffused the northern sky with glittering arcs of light; and in after years this, come to be regarded with superstitious reverence by the north-country people, was by them called Lord Derwentwater's Lights. The body was finally deposited in a Paris convent, despite the wish attributed to Lord Derwentwater in Surtees's bogus lines:

O carry me to Northumberland  
 In my father's grave to lie,  
 There chant my solemn requiem  
 In Hexham's holy towers,  
 And let six maids of fair Tynedale  
 Scatter my grave with flowers.

In 1871, during the disturbances of the Commune, the grave was opened and the body lost.



36 The Reception to Garibaldi at Stafford House in 1864

*The Illustrated London News*



37, 38 The Duchess of Teck's Wedding at Kew in 1866

*The Illustrated London News*



"I can't see why you're not a Jacobite," said Perdita. "I should have thought it would be just your sort of thing."

"Well," I said, "I'm not sure; I may be; but it's been so overworked that it's less attractive than it should be. At the time I expect we should both have been Jacobites, for aesthetic reasons; but now it's all over and done with it seems more original to be devoted to the memory of Sophia of Zell and George I; he must after all have been a funny little old creature, and he said some amusing things."

"You're rather personal and arbitrary, aren't you?" she answered, "and surely you don't still like things because they're original; you should have got over that at Oxford."

"Yes," I said, "but you see there are a lot of things I can't get over, and one of them is being born 'contrary'; try as I may I can't help liking people because they're different, and views because no rational person holds them; and frankly I don't try very hard. For instance, I am a passionate Cromwellian, and much more attached to Lady Fauconberg than to Princess Henrietta."

"Which is which, and why?" she asked, "I'm not there at all."

"Well, Henrietta was the sister of Charles II, you know the one, who married Louis XIV's brother and hashed up our foreign policy with the Treaty of Dover; Lady Fauconberg was more simply Mary Cromwell, a sister of Lady Claypole and daughter of Oliver. Let's move on to the Cromwell relics in the next room here; there's quite a large collection."

I did not point out the case of relics of Charles I, the stained vest of sky-blue silk which he wore on the scaffold, nor the handkerchief with his crowned initial in its corner, which are displayed in the same room as the chessmen and the Derwentwater sheet. Charles I does not interest me at all; Cromwell does deeply. The next room, in which the death-mask, Bible, coffin-plate, and portrait medallions of the Lord Protector are set out, is dominated by the tall

State bed of James II, in which Mary of Modena gave birth to James Francis Edward. This magnificent four-poster, with hangings and canopy of red and yellow figured velvet, was the perquisite of the Lord Chamberlain, and has been placed in Lancaster House by the liberality of one of his descendants. A sufficiently pathetic intimacy links this bed with the accession of William and Mary. Into its sheets, murmured the sceptical, an alien baby had been smuggled in a warming-pan. From the dark seeds of this suspicion sewn in the minds of Londoners, there sprang up in the city a rank crop of hatred and disloyalty. It was in vain that Catholics clamoured about a miraculous birth; the copper glint of the warming-pan met them at every turn. The hangings, bedspread, and stump-work monograms are in excellent condition, and only a fringe of those soft velvet bobbles with which it amused the Victorians to embellish their curtains and tablecloths, indicates the passage of two and a half centuries.

We went over to the Cromwell death-mask. As death-masks go it does not seem to me a good example. The surface is rough, the wax colourless brown, and apart from serving as a guide to the Protector's facial proportions, this pale and dirty crust is not remarkable. It is one of a number of casts taken from the original death-mask in September 1657. The Protector's head, chopped from his embalmed corpse by order of Charles II, is kept to-day in a wooden box in a vicarage near Sevenoaks; his body has either disappeared or is, as legend relates, actually preserved in a cistern-like coffin lying in one of the upper rooms of Newburgh Priory, the Yorkshire house of his son-in-law, Lord Fauconberg. I like to think that the story of the body's secret removal by Lady Fauconberg, and its secret deposition in her own house, where it remains to exert a malign influence on all who touch its coffin, is true. The story of Lost Bodies in English History has yet to be written; Queen Anne Boleyn's empty tombs, Strafford's disappearance after death, the whereabouts of Sir Thomas More. . . .

"It's not like a human face, really," said Perdita, "but what a firm mouth and jaw. Still I'd rather look at something else."

"No doubt," I said, "but let's finish off this case. Here is his pocket Bible."

This little book, by far the most personal of Cromwellian relics, was printed in London under the Protectorate. At first sight it looks like a mediocre product of one of the Elzevir presses, and were it not for the English imprint I should have taken it for this. It is much thumbled, and on the reverse of the fly-leaf, *O. CROMWELL* is scrawled in His Highness's own large, untidy hand. How different is this unpretentious, cheap little copy of the book on which the Lord Protector based his autocracy, to the ornate morocco prayer-books of Charles II, sumptuously bound and tooled by Mearne, stamped with *C*'s winged and crowned. Not long ago I came across one of these Carolean books of devotion, Jeremy Taylor's *The Communicant*, bound in scarlet with the royal monograms and other signs of Mearne's work. It was labelled "binding, eight shillings," and I eagerly bought it for my embryonic collection, while mentally commenting that a Jeremy Taylor bound for Charles II is a contradiction in terms.

Besides the plate from the Protector's coffin, ripped off at the exhumation by the Serjeant of the House of Commons, who thought it was gold, there is in this room one of the hatchments put up at Cromwell's funeral. This more than royal funeral was the most pompous interment which Londoners had seen for many a long day. The corpse was lapped in lead and removed from Whitehall, where the death took place, to Somerset House. Here four rooms had been prepared, one within the other, hung with black, the three outer ones with black cloth, the inner room with black velvet. Each room contained an escutcheon of the Protector's arms, crowned with the crown imperial; each also held a chair of state, beneath a cloth of state, and above the cloth another escutcheon in gilt upon taffeta. In the inmost room lay the corpse, and the effigy of the dead ruler

clad in purple velvet laced with gold and furred with ermine, about the waist an embroidered belt with a golden sword finely chased, in the right hand a sceptre, in the left a globe, upon the waxen head a cap of estate. Behind the head was set a jewelled imperial crown upon a cushion of gold tissue on a golden chair, and on either side of the State bed on which the figure lay stood a rich suit of complete armour, and at the feet his crest. The bed itself, draped in black velvet, was raised upon a double dais, and enclosed within rails and "ballasters" coated with velvet; at each corner of the balustrading rose pillars plastered with military trophies carved and gilt, carrying on their tops the supporters of the imperial arms "bearing streamers crowned," at their base shields and crowns of gilt. Within the rails stood eight silver candlesticks, five feet high, with waxen tapers burning, and between them four great standards with again the Cromwell arms painted upon taffeta banners. It was not till the twenty-third of November—the Protector had breathed his last on September 3rd—that preparations for the State funeral were completed. The body itself was quietly removed and buried in the Abbey some days previously, and it was only the great wax doll that was drawn down to Westminster in the magnificent funeral car by six horses, black-mantled and black-plumed, followed by Officers of the Household, the representatives of the Army and Navy, the Magistracy, Judges, the foreign ambassadors, and the members of the Privy Council, each sombre company preceded by drums, trumpets, and banners, and a horse of state hung with black velvet. Last of all was led the Horse of Honour, trapped with embroidered crimson, upon its head a nodding cluster of red, white, and yellow plumes, making a sudden splash of colour in that dark funeral train. Once within the Abbey, the effigy was placed upon an architectural catafalque, "a sort of temporary monument much used in Foreign Parts," and exhibited for a certain time to the public view. The wearying pomp of this funeral was indeed the antithesis of the stern homespun ideals of Oliver's earlier life; and one feels it is the

little Bible and not the hatchment (perhaps one of those from the funeral chariot itself) which is the most suitable reminder of the Lord Protector.

. . . . .

We had now come to the most famous part of the Lancaster House collections, the clothes. Here again, a little imagination in arrangement would aid the sightseer. I am inclined to add that a sense of humour and the patronage of some good dry-cleaning establishment would not come amiss. The collections of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century clothes in the London Museum is unrivalled in this country, and the somewhat squalid effect which their present display creates is surely unnecessary. Old clothes can be as repellent as anything I know; the discarded sheaths of long-dead human beings, they have horrific possibilities which at Lancaster House are exploited to the full. Dirty, the white muslin ruffles grey and brown, hung limply on flat-chested lay figures of improbable size and shape, how can they give, as they should, any illusion of the period which they represent? But it is not only the lack of window-sense with which these clothes are shown that is exasperating, it is just as much the choice of clothes to show. Even in the great ballroom at Lancaster House space for glass-cases is limited, and while I fancy a certain rotation is attempted, each time I have been to the museum the preponderance has been all in favour of dresses of the pre-War and very late Victorian period. Lady Sysonby no doubt looked very handsome in the dress she chose to wear at Ascot in 1911; but to exhibit this peculiar creation of white lace and black satin seems sheer waste of space. Similarly, the undistinguished tea-gown of brown velvet worn by Miss Horsburgh when moving the reply to the King's Speech in 1937 is not, to me at any rate, of pulsating interest. To be more irreverent still, I am not especially pleased to see Queen Mary's wedding-dress, or the clothes and toque she wore at the marriage of the Duke of Kent. In time, perspective will give all these an interest as great

as that of the wedding-dress of Princess Charlotte, or the coronation kirtle of Queen Victoria; but could not they be stored up in the recesses of the museum's cupboards till a later day has brought them a real historic importance? We can still see and cheer Queen Mary, I have myself enjoyed talking to Lady Sysonby, and no doubt Miss Horsburgh is one of our foremost women politicians; need we therefore admire their cast-off clothes?

The Tudor clothes in the collection are not the best part of it. Few English sixteenth-century dresses have survived, and except for a man's cloak and one or two doublets and hose, all in good stages of decay, there is nothing to detain one here. The nightgown of Queen Elizabeth would be of greater interest were it more fully shown; but pinned and folded, badly in need of ironing, it is unimpressive. This garment and a coloured plate of English Delft, dated 1602, are the only traces of the great Queen in the London Museum. The plate, painted with a jolly elementarily drawn view of the Tower of London and river, bears the couplet:

The Rose is red, the leaves are grene  
God save Elizabeth our queene.

. . . . .

"Clothes," I said to Perdita, "are much more important than you think."

"What *do* you mean?" she answered. "I couldn't think them more important."

"Quite," I answered, determined to get a favourite theory off my chest, "but I don't mean quite like that. Anyway, have you ever thought *why* you like clothes so much, or why I do. You may say it's vanity, the natural wish to look one's best; but I think that the effect of clothes on character is just as subtle and strong as the effect of character on clothes. Post-War clothes were typical of the post-War mentality, men's particularly; informality, loose, open-necked shirts, "slacks," and all the rest; in the same way these tight late Victorian clothes, with bustles and rows

of buttons, all utterly constraining, give a key to the late Victorian mind."

"My God," she said, "then what was the Edwardian mind like. Look at this."

She pointed to an indescribably odd dress of blue satin, of a few years before the War. I do not for a moment suppose that pre-War dresses at Lancaster House really represent the best that Edwardian dressmakers had to offer; but taken all round they evoke a peculiar vision of the period. The chief thing about them is their innate unoriginality; each dress is a perversion of some earlier style, many of them harking well back into the eighteenth century, as though their designers had travelled through time to the court of Marie Antoinette and returned hastily with a few frills and feathers which they had attached willy-nilly to a sac-like basis of silk. The hats, those colossal plumed creations of straw, must, I imagine, have looked rather well, set upon built-up coils of hair and shading the face with their curling feathers. I am far from ridiculing the Edwardians, I have often regretted that I did not share their privilege of the last careless rapture of undisputed aristocracy, but for that very reason the Lancaster House display seems unjust to them and their age. When we had sufficiently recovered our balance to look at other things, we turned to the lovely simple dresses, full-skirted, with puffed sleeves, of the 1830's. These pretty and dignified clothes, made of maroon silk or gay green tartan, or dove-coloured satin, are the quintessence of good taste. The later fashions of the 'forties and 'fifties, the reintroduction of the hoop, the bonnets getting larger and then suddenly very small, have an almost equal charm. This Lady Dedlock date is well represented at the museum, and many of the clothes might have come straight from the illustrations of *Phiz*. The dresses of the next three decades have an ornate grace, and it was not till the 'nineties that the rot set in—the bunches of drapery, the innumerable pleats, the ugly accessories. The 'sixties being the period to which Perdita thinks that she belongs, we examined clothes of this date with some

care. The dress worn by the Princess of Wales at her marriage, an innovation in that it "had fullness" only at the back, is an excellent example of the fashions connected with her name. It is made of silver tissue, lace, and net, and was worn with a narrow-brimmed little bonnet with sprigs of orange-blossom. But by far the loveliest of all the dresses in Lancaster House is an earlier wedding-dress of silver tissue, worn by Princess Charlotte in 1817. It is impossible to imagine anything more exquisite than this shimmering simple dress of silver thread, with a silver tissue train. Whether it was the choice of the bride or not it is no longer, I fancy, possible to establish; but it does suggest that had Princess Charlotte survived and come to the throne, court clothes might well have escaped the heaviness and ornate elaboration of those admired by Queen Victoria. I know nothing at all about Princess Charlotte—apart from the malicious tomboy sketch of her in the Lieven memoirs—but on this dress alone I feel ready to revere her memory. The white tomb in St. George's Chapel at Windsor, and a mourning tea-set (with Britannia weeping and the motto, "In Memory of Princess Charlotte") which I one day found, have emphasized my interest which this dress aroused long ago in the Regent's daughter.

In contrast to Princess Charlotte's fairy-tale wedding-dress is the prosaic going-away costume of the Duchess of Teck, mother of Queen Mary. This, much the largest of all the royal dresses, is made of grey silk, edged with bright blue silk ribbon, white lace, and a border of blue silk fringe. The bonnet is trimmed with gauze, blue velvet, and a grey ostrich feather; under the brim nestles a knot of pink rose-buds. The remarkable thing about it is its size; and evidently the voluminosity of the bodice, and the vast fullness of the sweeping silk skirt, must have corresponded in some way to the size of the wearer. Queen Victoria's cousin, the daughter of the first Duke of Cambridge and granddaughter of George III, was thirty-three at the time of her marriage, in June 1866, to Prince Teck. The bridegroom, four years younger, was tall, thin, and of a smart



military appearance. The wedding at Kew Church was celebrated by the Archbishop of Canterbury in the presence of the Queen and the royal family, but with little pomp. The interior of the church was simply decorated, the pulpit and the rails had been covered with purple velvet and gold lace, and from the ceiling had been hung a garland of flowers; the pews had been removed from the body of the church, and velvet chairs placed upon scarlet drugget awaited the arrival of the illustrious guests. An awning connected the church porch with the door of Cambridge Cottage, where the wedding breakfast had been prepared. A little before twelve o'clock the Archbishop entered the church and walked up to the altar, and some minutes later the Princess of Wales, in a white bonnet trimmed with blue, and a white Brussels lace shawl, came out of the door of the Cottage upon the arm of the Duke of Cambridge, and made her way beneath the awning into the cool of the church. They were followed by the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cambridge, the Crown Prince of Denmark and the Grand Duchess Dowager of Mecklenburg, the Duke of Edinburgh and the Grand Duchess of Mecklenburg; and the Princesses Helena and Louisa in white silk skirts, white jackets, and white and blue bonnets with a single pink rose. The Queen, who had arrived by train half an hour earlier and driven straight to the church, now descended from the gallery and took her place near the altar. As soon as the royal party had disposed themselves, the bridegroom, in a blue coat with a black velvet collar, a white rose in his button-hole, came into the church with the Austrian Ambassador, and kissed Her Majesty's extended hand. He stationed himself at the altar, the organ played, the choir began to sing, and at the first words of Keble's hymn, "How welcome was the Call," the bride, amply billowing with white satin, tulle, and three flounces of Honiton lace was seen advancing through the West Door on her brother's arm. Her train, also of white satin with lace flounces, was hitched to the dress with sprays of orange-blossom and myrtle. On her head was a coronet of diamonds and a wreath of orange-blossom,

interspersed with myrtle gathered in the gardens at Kew. She held an elaborate bouquet "of orchidaceous and other flowers," mixed with more orange-blossom and a number of fern fronds, and trimmed with Honiton lace. A diamond necklace and diamond earrings completed the effect. Her four bridesmaids wore white tarlatan over blue silk, and tunics of tarlatan "embroidered with straw," and looped up with cornflower sashes, bonnets with wreaths of cornflowers and pink heath, and veils to the bottom of the dress. Only the Queen, in her deep crêpe mourning, sitting to the north of the altar, broke the pale harmony of this white and blue scene. Once the ceremony was over, the bride and bridegroom hurried to kiss the Queen, and the other royal ladies, and then, to the strains of the *Ode to Joy* from the Ninth Symphony, they formed up in procession and slowly left the church, going over to Cambridge Cottage beneath the awning, between excited rows of schoolchildren standing there in the sun. The wedding-breakfast, spread in two adjacent rooms, was "sumptuous," and the cake itself, set on the table in the principal room, a sugar marvel. The base, decorated with an arabesque design in sugar, bore shields with the illuminated monograms of the Prince and Princess. Around the top were cornucopias filled with orange-blossom, and vases of orange flowers and lilies of the valley. Above this was an open temple, on which cupids supported more vases of flowers; and yet higher a figure bearing aloft a vase containing white flowers, "emblematical of chastity, happiness, and union." When the food had been consumed, the cake cut, and toasts drunk, the Queen prepared to leave, driving off in her carriage just before three o'clock, with the Princesses Helena and Louisa. The bride and bridegroom left the Cottage at half-past four, in an open carriage, bowing and smiling to the crowd as they passed under the great triumphal arch of greenery, surmounted by flags and bearing the legend, BLESS THE HAPPY PAIR, erected on Kew Green. As their carriage moved off from the doors of Cambridge Cottage a shower of satin slippers fell about it,

thrown by the hands of the hilarious royalties. And so they drove away for their honeymoon at Ashridge, through the long-cast shadows of a late June afternoon. And this heavy grey and blue travelling dress, far more antique and strange than the Elizabethan nightgown, played its part in that typical Victorian scene, which seems separated from us by much more than seventy-one years.

. . . . .

"Now," I said Perdita, "would you like to go and look at the things in the basement—the Newgate Prison cell and the models of London? I used to love them as a child."

"No," she said firmly, "I don't think I would. The clothes have been such fun that one feels caught up in the last century, and probably the basement's cold."

We went out of the great rooms and down the staircase; and suddenly as I looked sideways at Perdita, with her head held so high and her golden hair, it seemed as though we had moved back three-quarters of a century; for a moment the air seemed filled with music, and the staircase with the rustle of watered silk; the hall below us was radiant with the soft yellow glow of the gas-lamp on the outside of the lantern, and slowly up the stairs towards us came Harriet Duchess of Sutherland and the Queen.

## VII

### KENSINGTON PALACE

THE residence of William and Mary at Kensington Palace seems symbolic of the changed position of the monarchy after James II's flight. A limited sovereignty, embodied in the unexciting figures of the new king and Queen, he small, sallow, and foreign, she homely, handsome, and given to knotting fringe, required a setting less extensive than the water-palace that had served the Tudors and the previous Stuarts. When Whitehall was destroyed by fire in 1698, Queen Mary's embalmed body, aromatic with Indian balsam, stuffed with gums and spices, shrouded in scented sparadrape and enclosed within two coffins between which were sprinkled damask powders, had been lying for four years next that of her uncle Charles II in the new royal vault at Westminster Abbey, by Margaret Beaufort's tomb. But, though she did not live to see the disappearance of the palace she dutifully affected to dislike—the water lapping ceaselessly against Wren's buttress walls, the evening mists, the long corridors and the damp—she was tactful enough to share her husband's enthusiasm for Lord Nottingham's old house at Kensington, bought by the King in the hope that distance from the metropolis and the neighbourhood of the Thames would be good for his chronically asthmatic chest. Although at Hampton Court William and Wren together achieved a palace of some grandeur, Kensington remained the favoured royal residence, at any rate in Queen Mary's lifetime. It was here that she died of the smallpox in December 1694, and here that Bishop Burnet anxiously watched the Dutch king gasping to death eight years later, and listened attentively for the death-rattle that would imply the accession of lymphatic Princess Anne. "A place to drink tea in," was Leigh Hunt's verdict on Kensington Palace: it proved also for its royal



39 The Great Staircase at Kensington Palace

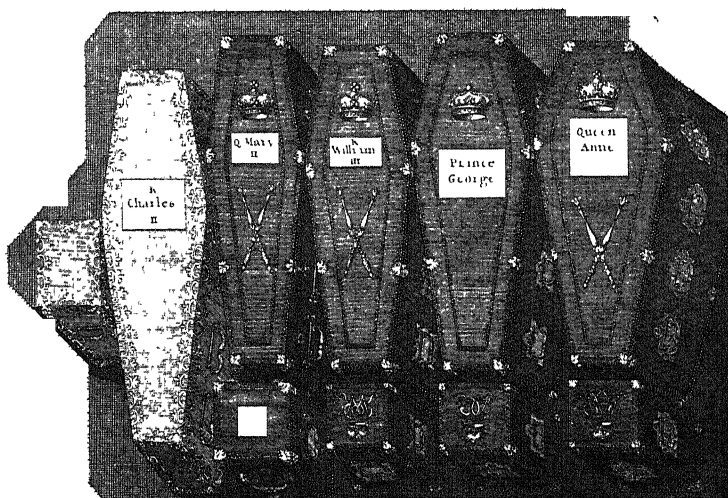
*From Pyne's "Royal Residences"*



40 Wax Effigy of Queen Mary II  
*From Westminster Abbey*



41 Bust of Queen Caroline  
*Windsor Castle*  
*Reproduced by gracious permission of*  
*H M The King*



42 "The Royal Vault" Westminster Abbey

inmates a place to die in. William III, Mary, Queen Anne, Prince George of Denmark, George II, all expired within this "neat villa," as Evelyn pleased to call the new palace. Evelyn did not relish this removal of the court to Lord Nottingham's house, and indeed as the seat of royalty there was even less to be said for Kensington under William and Mary than in the eighteenth century. The most important of the state rooms are Kent's additions to Sir Christopher Wren's hasty rearrangements of the older house, and the great staircase with its painted, peopled walls was radically altered and decorated to the taste of George I. In Mary's day Kensington was nothing but a renovated and "irregular" country-house, with a lack of tradition possibly welcome to the occupants of the throne. Whitehall must have been thick with unwanted memories for Mary, and though Wren might build her a terrace garden with swirling steps to the river, it must have been hard to forget that Mary Beatrice and the exiled king had in their time looked out over the broad and shallow reaches of the Thames, into whose dark waters James II had dropped the Great Seal of England. Kensington Palace, to-day a sad and dreary place, was originally pleasant enough: the air was good and clean, the rooms light, the whole effect probably both dignified and cosy. In these long galleries, with their high, solemn windows, Mary II would sit knotting with a group of ladies, one of them reading aloud to the rest. Sir Charles Sedley's ironic jingle celebrates this perennial occupation of the Queen:

Blest we who from such queens are freed,  
 Who by vain superstition led,  
 Are always telling beads;  
 But here's a queen now thanks to God,  
 Who when she rides in coach abroad  
 Is always knotting threads.

Like her sister Anne, Mary II had weak eyes which quickly tired, and the fringe-work helped to pass the time at Kensington, when the King was either away or closeted with his ministers, and the wan gaiety of the little Duke of

Gloucester, Princess Anne's one surviving child, with his pretty face, abnormally large head, and feeble legs, strutting up and down the corridors brandishing his drums and trumpets, had palled.

"It's no wonder," I said as Perdita and I approached Kensington Palace one afternoon, "that it is a melancholy place and boring, too. The dreariness of Mary's life, and of Anne's, must have left some mark on it all."

"I remember it seemed extraordinarily dead when I went there once before," said Perdita, "but perhaps it never was very lively."

"No," I said, "perhaps not. William and Mary did not have an intensely lively court: the political undercurrents must have prevented real gaiety. William was odious to the Queen anyway, although he was so upset at her death."

In her graphic, humble letters to her husband in Ireland, in the summer of 1690, Queen Mary's attitude of cringing affection is depressingly evident. Reporting on the progress of the work at Kensington, she begged the King's pardon for the smell of paint which still impregnated his apartments there, and explained at some length what "fiddling work" the outside of the house required, why the windows must be boarded while the scaffolding was still up, how easy it would be for her to make shift with Lord Portland's chambers till her own were ready. From her side of the correspondence it is apparent that William was neither pleased nor gracious over the delay; and the saccharine timidity of the Queen's letters gives a pathetic glimpse of the bitterness that tinged domestic life in the placid atmosphere of Kensington Palace. Mary had a high ideal of queenship, and though by no means a romantic or a glamorous figure-head, she had a certain dignity (much enhanced by her imposing height, and even perhaps by her later corpulence) which captured the popular imagination. Her interests in life were diverse, and indeed conflicting; an unashamed appreciation of Congreve's comedies went hand in hand with sincere efforts at the moral reformation of Londoners, and a maternal attention to the development of the S.P.C.K.;



for the rest "gardenage" and architecture absorbed her time, the latter, Burnet's name for her superintendence of the embellishment of Kensington. With her bulbous-headed nephew by her side she would stand watching the workmen decorating the new rooms, and on one occasion she presented the Duke of Gloucester with a set of ivory tools because of the child's interest in the work. Her height increased by the cornette caps and hanging fontange ribbons then in vogue, this large but stately woman would wander up and down the panelled chambers of the little palace, conferring with Archbishop Tillotson, talking to Burnet, or laughing with the young Lord Buckhurst, devising schemes for sumptuary laws and methods of shortening the fontanges, her mind at times tortured by the King's relationship with Elizabeth Villiers, at others possibly by swiftly dismissed memories of her father and her own choice between the conflicting loyalties of 1688. When she died at Kensington, quite suddenly at the age of thirty-three, her plump face disfigured by erysipelas, the court and city mourned her genuinely. The King was so shattered that he fell into a series of fits. Verses on the unexpected disaster were forthcoming by the hundred:

The great Inexorable seals his ears,  
Deaf to our cries, unmelted by our tears;  
The irrevocable posting mandate flies,  
Torn from three kingdoms' grasping arms, she dies!

A yet more abandoned grief was expressed in lines written by Lord Cutts, "the Salamander":

She's gone—the beauty of our isle is fled,  
Our joy cut off, the great Maria dead;  
Tears are too mean for her, our grief should be  
Dumb as the grave and black as destiny.

The final couplet of this elegy exemplifies all too unhappily the changed meaning of certain adjectives to-day:

So graceful and so lovely ne'er was seen  
A finer woman and more awful queen.

Bishop Burnet has left the terrible account of Queen Mary at the beginning of her short illness, sitting up all night in her closet at Kensington, the conviction of death upon her, destroying papers, the contents of which can never be known. Her ravings to the Archbishop of Canterbury just before her death, when she accused her doctor of placing a Popish nurse behind the screen in her bedroom to spy upon her, indicate the direction in which her mind turned; it is generally assumed by those of Jacobite sympathies that the papers she burned so feverishly concerned her treachery to her father.

It was a dark afternoon, a Sunday, that Perdita and I went to Kensington Palace. This did not matter, for a bright sun only emphasizes the innately dismal atmosphere of the long, high rooms, and the ugly khaki-coloured panelling, with the monograms of William and Mary on the cornices. The reserved red brick of the south front, the flat pilasters, and the double row of eleven tall windows, looked dull and dead as we approached.

"It's wonderfully melancholy," I said as we passed the round pond; "as if no real life had ever gone on within it at all, except for a sort of chintz gaiety about the rooms where Victoria spent her childhood. I like the contrast, though, between the extravagant Barrie business of Peter Pan and the children in their prams in the garden, and this dead, empty, macabre place, with state apartments which don't even feel haunted. Of course, I contend that no real life ever did in fact go on; only the attenuated and materialistic existence of William and Mary, then Anne quarrelling with the Duchess of Marlborough, and then those dreary Hanoverians. There can never have been spiritual content in it at all."

"Doesn't it depend on what you mean by spiritual content?" asked Perdita, "I can think of a lot of houses in which nothing ever seems to happen, but surely somebody must have left some mark on Kensington? After all, it was a centre for the court for a good long time, wasn't it? And it can't all have been dingy—were there no amusements at all?"

"Well," I said, "I leave you to judge how empty or full their lives can have been. The court was here for a part of each year from William and Mary to the death of George II, who was found lying on the floor of a room here with the ventricle of his heart burst and his head split open against a piece of furniture."

"What's a ventricle?" asked Perdita.

"That's one of the things I've never known; but after George II no king ever lived here again; William came here for his asthma and George died here from his heart, so it's all neatly rounded off, isn't it?"

We had by this time reached the palace, and paying our sixpences we went up the Queen's Stairs, a fine, plain example of a Wren staircase, built in 1690-1 for Queen Mary. I think that these stairs, panelled, dignified, small, and sensible, bring one as close to the Marian period as anything in the palace. I have sometimes sat in a window-seat at the top of them, with the high windows and their wide early glazing bars at my back, looking down the staircase and trying to recapture something of an age for which fundamentally I have no shred of sympathy. It is a hard task. With the best will in the world you cannot clearly picture these stairs thronged with people, the heavy figure of Queen Mary mounting slowly, her hand on the bannister, a crowd of women behind her. Yet this staircase does give me a certain feeling of authentic contact with the past. I know that this conscious effort of the imagination, this straining of its sinews is slightly absurd; but if, as I assume, you can get as much from places as from memoirs and letters and portraits, self-consciousness in its pursuit is not merely unavoidable, it is essential. But in spite of everything, Kensington Palace has always struck me as peculiarly barren.

"It has," I said to Perdita, "the spiritual content of an empty barrack."

"No," she replied, "there's more to it than that, more than you think; I can even imagine it coming alive."

"I wonder if you are right."

We stood in the first long room, Queen Mary's Gallery; behind us a row of windows, before us a row of gloomy full-length portraits; the panelling yellow-brown, the ceiling barrelled, two marble fireplaces suddenly surmounted by writhing gilded overmantels, superb with carved drapery, holding Vauxhall mirror-plates. The portraits, lurking pompously along the walls, frustrate the gaiety of these overmantels; dim pictures of royalties, they are, Queen Mary with crown, orb, and sceptre beside her, repeating the conventional royal formula of the pose of her grandfather Charles I at Greenwich; next her, Frederica Louisa, the Margravine of Brandenburg Ansbach, waxen-faced, a Buddha-like child at her right arm, her left gesturing with a merry melancholy elegance above her head; there is the Emperor Charles VI, whom good Queen Caroline so nearly married; and William III, sombre, pinched, by Kneller; and then plump, short, and bird-like, Queen Caroline herself. The black eyebrows of Mary II give to her gross face a supercilious touch; her tight, cherry-red lips and her bold, protruding eyes, perhaps her Hyde heritage, make this be-robed figure seem far removed from the refinement of earlier Stuarts.

On the accession of George II in 1737, the Queen's apartments at Kensington, consisting of the staircase up which we had come, the gallery in which we stood, and the three smaller rooms, closet, dining-room, and privy chamber leading one out of the other from it, became the home of Caroline of Ansbach. All these rooms, which form a strip on the east side of the palace, are part of the old Wren buildings. In the same way the King's Gallery, with its eleven windows along the south front, and the great staircase behind its western end, were built by Wren. The state rooms between these two sets of apartments, the Cupola Room, the King's drawing-room, and the King's privy chamber, Queen Victoria's bedroom, and Queen Caroline's drawing-room which overlooks the central or clock court along one side of which is incorporated what remains of old Nottingham House, are Georgian additions. The plan

of the first floor, studied from the east side, shows to the north the Queen's stairs, gallery, and three chambers, the last giving access to Queen Caroline's drawing-room. The outer wall of this chain of rooms would, if carried on, intersect the great King's Gallery at its westerly end. The Georgian state rooms, tacked on the King's Gallery, thus protrude at right-angles to the Queen's suite, and from the windows of Queen Mary's privy chamber the gilded lead figures and white marble niches of Kent's Cupola Room are plainly to be seen across the way. Formal access to the palace was through the clock-tower gateway on the west side, and up the frescoed stairway painted under George I. From the landing at the top of the stairs doors led off, a southern door to a passageway towards the King's Gallery, an eastern door into the Presence Chamber, whence one could turn north into Queen Caroline's drawing-room. Besides the clock court there were two other courtyards at Kensington, the Princess of Wales's Court and the Princess's Court, which lie parallel to one another at the north end of the palace directly behind the Queen's "side." The public is admitted, and that merely at the week-ends, to the state apartments at the south and east of the palace alone.

Caroline of Ansbach, the first able English queen since Elizabeth Tudor, did a good deal towards the improvement of Kensington. Enclosing three hundred acres of Hyde Park, she made a garden with greenhouses like those at Herrenhausen, filled with oranges and lemons. Here she walked and kept squirrels, and some tortoises the doge of Venice had sent her. She was a literate woman, and her two outdoor libraries, one a grotto at Richmond called "Merlin's Cave," the other a building designed by Kent on the site now occupied by Stafford House in the Green Park, though not, owing to the badness of the roads, within easy reach of Kensington, provided her, towards the end of her life, with considerable entertainment. She died in 1737, at St. James's, just ten years after her husband's accession; as her health worsened she would walk regularly round the gardens at Kensington, or sitting in the arbour she had had

constructed on an artificial mount there, gaze out over the new sheet of water called the Serpentine, evading the wind by the ingenious pivot device which made it possible to swivel the summer-house round at will. Queen Caroline, even as described by Lord Hervey, is by far the most attractive of the earlier Hanoverian royalties in England. Hervey, who was genuinely fond of her, and admitted that she was an entertaining conversationalist and companion, was quite unable to resist detailing her defects, her prejudices, her subservience to the King, her detestation of the Prince of Wales, her pride, her forms of vanity. On the whole she seems to have been wise, tactful and amusing; ambitious she certainly was, and determined in her control of the King who adored her and abused her without ceasing. George II, in spite of Hervey's accounts of his stupidity, ill temper, pomposity, peevishness, meanness and red-rimmed eyes, remains, across the centuries, a delightful figure. Fractious and contradictory, he would strut about the lofty state apartments at Kensington, snubbing everyone who spoke to him, ridiculing his ministers, his wife and his children, and meeting every new piece of information with the unanswerable ejaculation: "Pooh! Stuff!" He took a peculiar pleasure in infuriating all those with whom he had to deal; definite and exasperating, it is only from the safe distance of two hundred years that George II seems pleasing; at any rate he is no pale or grisaille figure in the English fresco.

Queen Caroline's taste in pictures was far superior to that of her husband. The untiring Hervey, determined to give posterity a glimpse of each facet of court life under George II, described in this connection one of the many occasions of the King's outbursts of fury with his wife. During an absence of the King in Hanover, the Queen, as Regent, was living at Kensington Palace, and took advantage of her freedom to replace pictures of his choosing in the great drawing-room, by some of hers. On his return, the King, who hated England and his limited authority here more than ever at each fresh visit to Hanover, and who had come back in four days just to show, thought Hervey, how fast

he could travel, contracting severe piles in the process, noticed these alterations. He vented his spleen on Lord Hervey, accusing him and the Queen of having taken away his "fat Venus," and filling the room up with Van Dycks, ordering everything to be put back by the next morning and the new pictures to be returned whence they had come. Lord Hervey, who knew that the banished pictures were now at Windsor and Hampton Court, and that the frames had been cut down to fit the new ones, pacified the King with some success; by the next morning the question of the pictures was forgotten.

Perdita was sitting in the window-sill of the Queen's dining-room, one of three small chambers joining the Wren Gallery to the big, dark, Kent drawing-room.

"I wish one knew," she said, "what sort of pictures and objects they had in their rooms; I mean one does know more or less, but are there no exact inventories like the Wolsey ones at Hampton Court?"

"Well," I replied, "I have seen in contemporary descriptions what pictures hung here, but furniture I wouldn't be certain about. That portrait there"—I pointed to the wall of the dining-room—"was here in 1760 when George II died; it's the widow Eliot, Queen Anne's nurse, by Riley. Then I think there was a battle-scene attributed to Holbein, and a picture of Danae in her shower of gold."

Queen Caroline had a natural predilection for German pictures, Holbein in particular. In the long gallery we had just entered in which a great deal of her life was passed, there hung a Holbein of Henry VIII, another called "Catherine of Aragon," portraits of Philip of Spain, Mary I, Queen Elizabeth "in a Chinese dress, drawn when she was a prisoner at Woodstock" (evidently the portrait of Arabella Stuart with a stag, which we had seen at Hampton Court), James I, Charles II, "the face by Sir Peter Lely," and the big coronation portraits of William and Mary, besides those of Queen Anne and Queen Caroline, the last "but poorly executed." At either end of the room stood a glass case, one containing an amber cabinet, the other a "beautiful

orrery." In the next room, which is small and curiously shaped, were Italian pictures, two heads purporting to be Mary and Elizabeth Tudor as children, by Holbein, and Queen Anne as a child, by Lely. The room next that in which we were sitting, the Queen's privy chamber, was lined with Dutch tapestry, a series of scenes of "the diversions peculiar to the natives of Holland"; over the mantelpiece was a Van Dyck group of Charles II, James II, and their sister as children. In the Queen's drawing-room itself, a vast dark cube with a ceiling painted by Kent showing Minerva encircled by the arts and sciences, were two Holbeins, three Van Dycks, and four Lelys. It was in this gloomy room, with its three doorways and the windows on one side looking out over the clock court, that the company, ranged in a semicircle, would await the entrance of the Queen, the Princesses, and their train from the private apartments. The formality and the "drawing-room conversation" of question and answer, is vividly preserved in a little play written by Lord Hervey for the entertainment of the Queen, called *The Death of Lord Hervey* or *A Morning at Court*, and as remarkable for its gibes at the Queen's greed and bad English as for its meticulous and disagreeable picture of the princesses and the courtiers. The purpose of the play is to suggest the probable reception by the Queen and her circle of the news of Lord Hervey's own death; it is divided into three scenes, the first set in the gallery where the royal family breakfasted, the second in the Queen's dressing-room, the third in her drawing-room. The first scene discovers Caroline, at nine in the morning, ordering her chocolate, sour cream and fruit, and simultaneously discussing with the princesses, Lord Lifford, and her bed-chamber woman, the news of Hervey's murder. The conversation, in English and French (it was in this latter language Caroline habitually spoke with her family) conveys a lively idea of just what talking to the Queen can have been like; Princess Emily, whom Hervey hated, laughs aloud at the account of his death; Princess Caroline, who was by way of being in love with him, nearly twists the thumbs off



her gloves in her agitation; the scene closes with the Queen scolding Emily for her flippancy. After this we see Caroline in her dressing-room, cleaning her teeth while her head is done by Mrs. Purcel, the princesses and the ladies of the bed-chamber standing round. Through an open door two of the clergy can be heard saying morning prayers, and the Queen begs Lady Sundon to close it: "Leave it open enough that those parsons to think we may hear and enough shut that we may not hear quite so much." There is general discussion of Hervey's death, of whether he will be a loss to the Queen, and of the beauties of Chiswick; presently Sir Robert Walpole enters and we are given a specimen of his talks with the Queen. In the drawing-room the ladies and gentlemen are waiting in their circle, making deep obeisance when the Queen enters, and answering each of her questions monosyllabically and in turn. "Very dusty, madam," "Very well, madam," "Very empty, madam," "Very fine, madam," they reply to the inquiries on the state of the roads, the health of their family, the emptiness of the town, the fineness of the summer for walking. In a corner Princess Emily, whom Hervey elsewhere described as "false and a great liar," with "as many enemies as acquaintances, for nobody knew without disliking her," is busy picking Lord Hervey's character to pieces, aided by the stuttering Duke of Grafton and the Duke of Newcastle. Of all the royal family it was Emily or Amelia whom Hervey despised most. Her sister, Princess Caroline, he even praised: "affability without meanness, dignity without pride, cheerfulness without levity, and prudence without falsehood," were the virtues he attributed to her, and though this does not suggest an irresistible charm, Princess Caroline at least emerges from Hervey's pages unscathed.

"I sometimes feel sorry for that court," I said to Perdita, "quite oblivious of how it would be held up to posterity. Think of Hervey, on the most intimate terms with the Queen and her family, consulted, trusted, shown every letter, constantly petted by the Queen, and all the time sneaking off and writing down conversations of the most confidential

nature, copying bits of letters, jotting every scandal, preparing a sort of glass tomb for a whole generation."

"But I should have done the same, wouldn't you," she said, "if one could have."

"You certainly could have," I answered, "you know how good your letters are." Perdita is one of the few people who write really first-rate letters; not one of the many who write good ones, but, I believe, a perfect example of that phenomenon the born letter-writer. "Of course I should have wanted to do what Hervey did; he's an immensely sympathetic man I'm afraid I find."

Perhaps the most interesting thing about Lord Hervey's *Memoirs* is the realization he alone of his contemporaries had, that he was living in a very dull age. "If I was much concerned," he writes, "for the pleasure people will take in reading these papers when pleasure and pain will be sensations no longer known to me, I should lament, too, the little importance of the occurrences and incidents belonging to the times in which I write and of which I treat." It is in such digressions that one feels a real and immediate contact with Hervey as a living being. In the same place he laments that the "little leisure I have for writing or correcting . . . and my setting down day by day the things herein contained just as they occur and whilst they are fresh in my memory" prevents his re-writing and embellishing his prose. His constant reference to himself in the third person—"as the Queen said to Lord Hervey"—makes him seem to stand back, within the frame of the picture he presents, and the occasional directly introspective passages take one by surprise. Hervey's attitude to history is very much my own: "And as I look upon these papers," he writes in another place, "rather as fragments that might be wove into a history than a history in themselves, so I generally put down such little particulars as can come to the knowledge of few historians. . . . I am very sensible, too, what mere trifles several things are in themselves which I have related; but as I know that I myself have had pleasure in looking at William Rufus's rusty stirrup, and the relics

of a half worm-eaten chair in which Queen Mary sat when she was married in the cathedral of Winchester to King Philip of Spain, it is for the sake of those who, like me, have an unaccountable pleasure in such trifling particulars relating to antiquity that I take the trouble of putting many of the immaterial incidents I have described into black and white. . . . It is to those only I write," he continues, "who prefer nature to gilding, truth to refinement, and have more pleasure in looking upon these great actors dressing and undressing than when they are representing their parts upon the public stage." There is surely no more entertaining reading in English than Hervey's *Memoirs*, nothing more stimulating than his faultless observation, malicious judgment, epigrammatic style (sprayed with classical allusion, solid with well-banked antitheses), and indeed all the merciless sophistication with which he analysed and dissected those petty Hanoverian minds. That they never suspected with what attention they were studied and with what precision reported, is a little strange. Lord Hervey was not universally popular; Pope, one of his political and personal enemies, thought him empty and dishonest, a silly popinjay. He attacked him twice in verse, once as Lord Fanny, and once as Sporus in the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*:

So well-bred spaniels civilly delight  
 In mumbling of the game they dare not bite.  
 Eternal smiles his emptiness betray,  
 As shallow streams run dimpling all the way.  
 Whether in florid impotence he speaks,  
 And as the prompter breathes the puppet squeaks,  
 Or at the ear of Eve, familiar toad,  
 Half froth, half venom, spits himself abroad,  
 In puns, or politicks, or tales or lyes,  
 Or spite or smut, or rymes, or blasphemies. . . .  
 Amphibious thing! that acting either part,  
 The trifling head or the corrupted heart,  
 Fop at the toilet, flatterer at the board,  
 Now trips a Lady and now struts a Lord.  
 Eve's tempter thus the Rabbins have expressed,  
 A cherub's face, a reptile all the rest.  
 Beauty that shocks you, parts that none will trust,  
 Wit that can creep, and pride that licks the dust.

"I wonder why Hervey is such fun and Pope such a bore?" I asked Perdita, "to me, I mean. It's the same sort of mind, but Pope is so cantankerous and unfunny; and his real poetry I don't care for; but then I don't like eighteenth-century English poetry too much."

"I hate political poets, I think," said Perdita.

"You're quite right," I said, "they were so dreadfully political, Pope and that crew; it's happening again now, isn't it, the confusion of poetry and politics, perhaps it does every few hundred years."

"But what about the non-political poets at that time," she said, "were there any?"

"I can remember a moment when I had an outrageous admiration for James Thomson," I said, "but I can't read a word of him now; the *Seasons* are tepid and peculiarly tedious; how humdrum those second-rate minds were then."

"Aren't second-rate minds humdrum in any age?" she replied.

I do not know quite why I have never enjoyed Pope, or indeed any poet of his generation, but Gray. I have only once felt any real contact with Pope at all; and that was not from reading the *Dunciad* or the *Rape of the Lock*. Not long ago I went to stay at a great Elizabethan house beside the Thames, by Reading; here had lived the sisters Martha and Theresa Blount, and here Pope would come to visit them. In these huge quiet rooms one could, I thought, reach some sort of nearness to the eighteenth century. From the walls Martha and Theresa Blount, apple-cheeked, dressed in bright silks, with loose, short, curling hair, laughed down at one, leaning from their gilded frames with a sort of careless vitality and grace. There were several portraits of them, gay and vivid, just as they must have been, walking beside the Thames, or under the heavy trees of the grass avenue, or over the lush veridian meadows behind the formal brick-walled gardens and the hedges of laurel and yew. Mapledurham is a late Tudor house, renovated in the late Victorian period; yet all about it hangs the spacious, tranquil atmosphere of the early eighteenth century, the feeling

of peace, of heroic couplets, of long, gossiping letters, of light carriages in the avenue, of slow sunsets and pale dawns over the river, of high rooms candle-lit, of the laughter of two clever sisters and the silken frou-frou of their skirts. Whether it is wholly fanciful or no, I am certain that Mapledurham, with the sunlight on its purple bricks and the walled gardens and the yew-trees, the meadows, the long grasses, the river, and the little church, lies locked for ever in the eighteenth century, the period when the most intense and actual life was being lived within its walls. Whatever others may or may not believe about the modern theories of time, there is no doubt in my own mind that some buildings and places remain fixed in the atmosphere of one particular moment, irretrievable and static as a photograph, ignoring the march of the centuries and needing only to be understood. It is for this reason distressing that Kensington Palace seems so coy and unwilling to reveal itself. Standing in the Queen's Gallery, as I had just been doing with Perdita and as I have sometimes stood half an hour together by myself, it is impossible to realize that it was in this room that Queen Caroline's lively breakfast-parties took place, those plentiful meals of hot chocolate and sour cream and fruit, with the princesses bickering and the Queen eating, and the King stamping in and attacking each of them in turn—"the Queen . . . for being always stuffing; the Princess Emily for not hearing him; the Princess Caroline for being grown fat; the Duke for standing awkwardly; Lord Hervey for not knowing what relation the Prince of Sultzbach was to the Elector Palatine." Of all this acrimonious life nothing remains; a long, plain room, with brown floorcloth over the parquet, black radiators stupidly placed beneath the marble mantelpieces, a white ceiling and yellow-brown walls; empty, dead, dreary, with the vacant atmosphere of an unused morgue.

"It's a strange delusion," I said to Perdita as we left Queen Caroline's drawing-room, and entered the Presence Chamber which joins it to the grand staircase, "that makes people think of Tudor rooms as dark and with no windows,

and eighteenth-century rooms as paradises of light. Have you ever been in a gloomier room than this; you can hardly see across it."

"But the ceiling is delightful," she replied irrelevantly, "that scarlet and blue."

"It's supposed to be from a classical design, Roman or something. This room used to be hung with tapestry, like the Queen's privy chamber."

The tapestry in the Presence Chamber, described by a contemporary as "very fine," showed the goddess Diana hunting and killing the wild boar. In two corners of this room stood statues; one in white marble of Venus, with an apple in her hand, the other Bacchus whose head was thought finely executed, but "the body, which is inferior to it, seems to be done by another hand." Over the chimney was a picture "in a grand taste, representing one of the graces in the character of Painting, receiving instructions from Cupid." This was said to be by Guido Reni, then much admired. To-day the Presence Chamber contains an oblong picture showing William III and the Duke of Schomberg riding in a battle-piece, a full-length of Catherine of Russia, squat, ridiculous, in a wide hooped skirt with a colossal imperial crown jammed down upon her head, another of Peter the Great, and an astonishingly fine Kneller of an Oriental called Francis Couplet. In the centre of the room, by the fireplace, stands a stray sedan-chair. We passed through this room quickly, coming out upon the solemn, painted tumult of the staircase, built by Wren and redecorated by Kent. Perdita drew in her breath sharply:

"I didn't expect *this*," she said, stepping forward and peering over the wrought bannisters down at the black treads of Irish marble, and the chessboard squares paving each landing and the hall below. The princely appearance of this magnificent staircase would be hard to convey to someone who had not seen it. The walls are painted to simulate the plaster sides of an old house; on the upper part a gallery is shown, with an Ionic colonnade carrying an entablature and a frieze with the heads of unicorns, the

masks of lions and foliage festoons, divided by fleurs-de-lis richly gilt. A balustrade runs the length of this scene; crowding against it are a number of people said to be courtiers of George I. For some odd reason the identities of these personages remain obscure; there are yeomen of the guard, and a young man in Polish dress said to be Mr. Ulric, a page of George I; on a plinth outside the balcony stands a second page, and other figures in the three compartments between the pillars on the north wall include two Turks who, taken prisoners by the imperial army in Hungary, attended George I when as Elector of Hanover he was wounded at the siege of Vienna; a Highlander; and Peter the Wild Boy, found in the woods of Herstwald near Hanover and brought to England in 1726 where he died some sixty years later. A fourth compartment occupies a part of the east wall, with more yeomen of the guard and some court ladies; beyond them in a niche is painted a figure of a Roman emperor, and round the landing where we stood these feigned niches are continued with grisaille statues of Apollo, Diana, Minerva and Hercules. Shadowy caryatides flank the doorway; gilded chiaroscuro panels and trophies ornament the walls of the hall beneath. In the centre of the ceiling four people look down, leaning over another balustrade; portraits, it is said, of Kent himself, two pupils, and a friend. Kent was not at all a good painter, but this staircase is as effective as it could well be; the solemnity and grandeur, the flippant note set by the crowded gallery, the pallid grisailles and chiaroscuro patterns, grey and magical and fine.

"It's rather a splendid conception, is it not?" I remarked, "pompous and yet not quite serious; less pretentious than that big Wren staircase at Hampton Court, but more fun. Here you can feel and see the people jostling up, the return of George II from Hanover, when Caroline would meet him at the gate of the courtyard and bring him up these stairs to welcome everyone in her long gallery. You can see it all."

"How I wish," she said, "that one could walk down it

instead of being roped off. Do you think one could get permission—"I want to walk down the stairs at Kensington Palace"—would they let me?"

"It is your sort of staircase, isn't it," I replied, "even more so than the tulip stairs at Greenwich, or the ones at Stafford House; the gilt and the ironwork and the browns and greys of the walls would make a good background."

Again, as at the Queen's House and at the London Museum, I looked critically at Perdita who was fixed in enchantment by the frescoes. No, I thought, she never lets one down. Her appearance was once more up to the mark; the presence with which she stood there gazing at the painted walls, the way she turned her head, the dignity and the lightness which were merged in her pose. She seemed in nothing modern. It was as natural that she should be standing at the brink of the staircase as that Kent should have painted it, or Queen Caroline walked up its treads. The unique power that I had originally felt to be in her, the power which for want of better words I can only call that of fitting in, of becoming part of a scheme of decoration, of emphasizing beauty by being in sympathy with it, this indeed is peculiarly her own. And if, I wondered, you are like this at eighteen, what will you be at twenty, or at thirty? As I watched her it seemed as though the whole immense painted room, the high, pictured walls, the scrolled balustrade, the black marble staircase, and the ceiling itself, the Emperors, the caryatides, the gods and goddesses, the trophies, the unicorn heads, the lily-flowers, and the swags of leaves, were fused in one vivid moment of new life, stirring, pulsating, vitalized by the girl standing and looking down the black marble sweep of the stairs. Again, as in Hertford House, everything seemed to have been waiting for her, and to have burst into a swirl of recognition at her approach. This frescoed room, which had seemed magnificently dead not a second before, was suddenly violently and wonderfully alive.

"Have you always had the power to do this to rooms?" I asked her diffidently.



She turned to me and the spell was broken.

"Do what," she said in surprise, "what have I been doing?"

"Oh, nothing," I said. "I was just being whimsy."

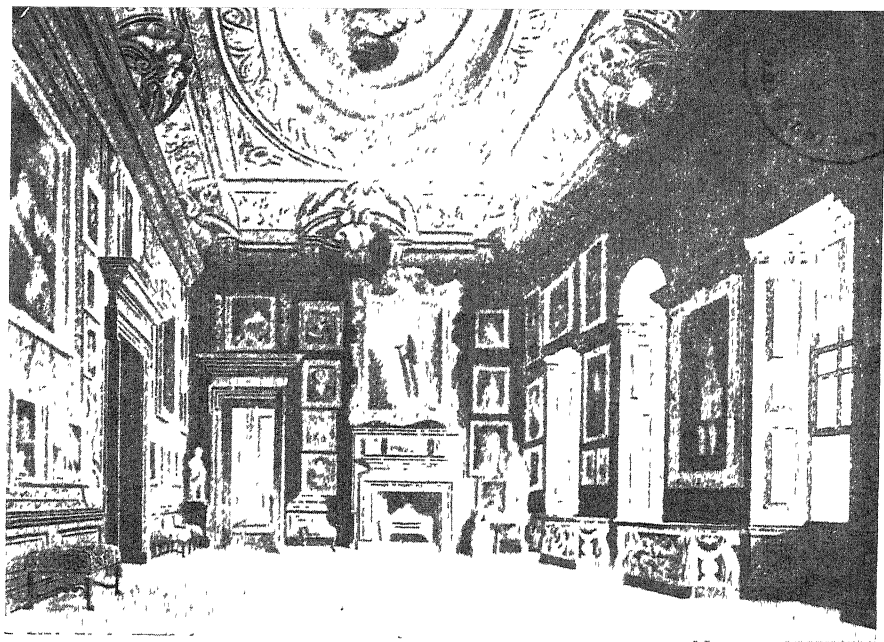
"Now you must tell me," she urged quickly, sensing a compliment, "you can't say things like that and then leave them."

"I only meant that I sometimes think you are In Tune with the Infinite," I said as tiresomely as I could, "and I wondered if you could tell me how long it's been going on."

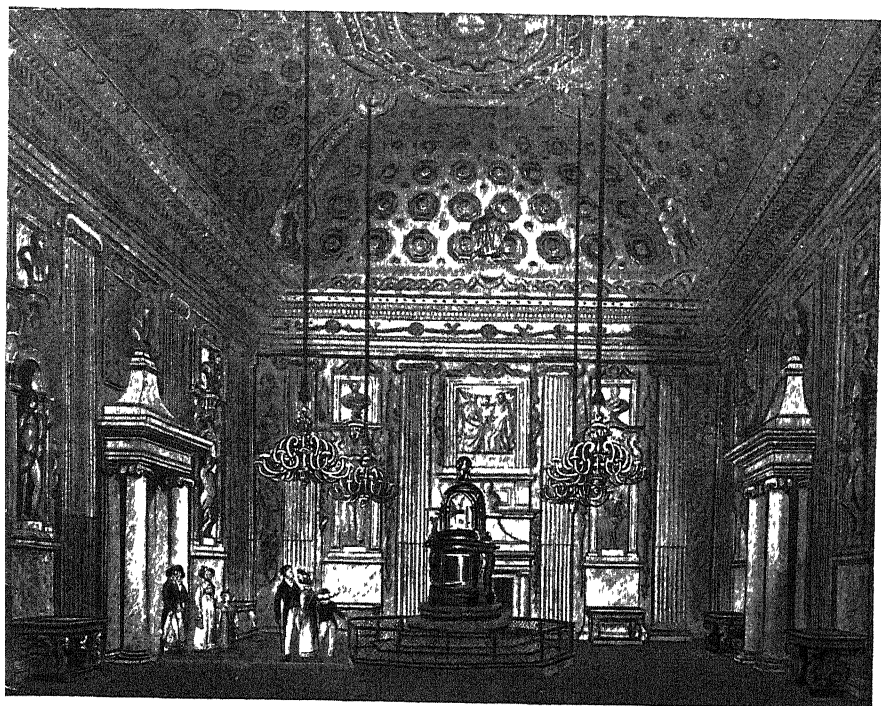
"What a beastly thing to say," she replied. We left the staircase for the King's Gallery; over my shoulder I could see the people in the painted wall across the way, once more glum, and inordinately dead.

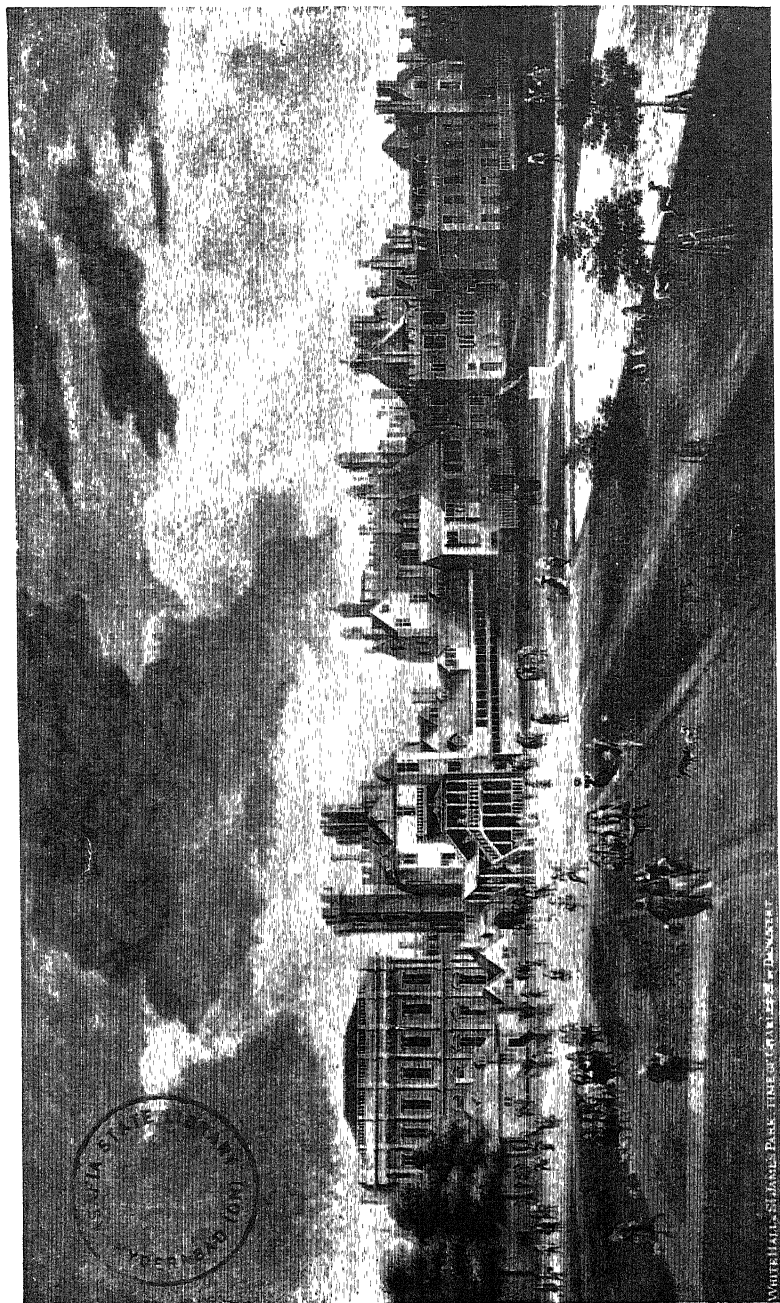
We had now come through to the south side, and into the Wren apartments again. The King's, or painted Gallery, a superb room designed in 1693, with a ceiling by Kent and carvings by Grinling Gibbons, runs the whole length of the south front. It is to this gallery that the eleven high windows between brick pilasters on the first floor of the palace belong. Six doors, some of them false, aid the symmetry of this spacious gallery, and a marble fireplace in its centre is surmounted by the famous map of the world, made by Robert Norden in 1694, which, by means of a hand like that of a clock, attached to a weather-vane on the roof, enabled William III to see whether the wind was blowing from a quarter which would permit his going out for exercise, or crossing the sea to his beloved Holland. With the exception of Mary and Anne, Kensington was for many years the home of exiles; William III, Prince George of Denmark, George I, George II, Caroline, Augusta Princess of Wales, none of these could ever feel for England as they did for their native country. Germany in particular, which for so long supplied rulers for the chief countries of Europe, maintains a hold on the hearts of her children which neither power nor wealth nor popularity in a foreign country can ever quite shake off. Whoever it may be, Liselotte Duchess of Orleans writing letters from Versailles in that large, childish

hand of hers, or George II rushing back and forwards to Hanover, there is the sense of perpetual nostalgia, of a harking back to the trim walks of Herrenhausen, the jagged Bavarian mountains, or the fertile banks of the Rhine. So far as the Hanoverian sovereigns were concerned, little was done to make them feel at home. Essential they may have been in the political scheme of things; actually wanted they were not. Hervey records with evident pleasure the peculiar idiocy of the mother of Princess Augusta of Saxe-Gotha, who married the Prince of Wales in 1736; she had refused to have her daughter taught English, on the grounds that "it must be quite unnecessary . . . for the Hanover family having been above twenty years on the throne, to be sure most people in England spoke German (and especially at Court) as often and as well as English—a conjecture," comments Hervey, "so well founded that I believe there were not three natives in England that understood one word of it better than in the reign of Queen Anne." It is easy to laugh with Lord Hervey and to see his point; but at the same time this story indicates the loneliness that may sometimes have overtaken this provincial royal family, stranded in a country they did not like and conversing with its inhabitants in French and English. Whether George II was aware of the prevalent contempt for himself and his family one does not know; at any rate he returned it with interest when in his worst moods, voicing a contempt for this country that amused Lord Hervey and must have exacerbated everybody else. Nothing in England, as against Hanover, was right: "No English cook . . . could dress a dinner; no English confectioner set out a dessert; no English player could act; no English coachman could drive, or English jockey ride; nor were any English horses fit to be drove or fit to be ridden; no Englishman knew how to come into a room, nor any Englishwoman how to dress herself; nor were there any diversions in England, public or private; nor any man or woman in England whose conversation was to be borne—the one, as he said, talking of nothing but their dull politics, and the others of nothing



43 Queen Caroline's Drawing-room at Kensington Palace





45 Whitehall from St. James's Park, ca. 1670, by Danckwerts

but their ugly clothes. . . . At Hanover," concludes Hervey, ironically, "plenty reigned, magnificence resided, arts flourished, diversions abounded, riches flowed and everything was in the utmost perfection that contributes to make a prince great or a people blessed." It says much for the urgency with which they were needed in this country, and the permanence of the fright which James II had succeeded in giving his subjects, that this peevish little German should have retained the throne. Queen Caroline's tact and Walpole's solid policy of peace were no doubt contributory factors; but it remains true that it was ultimately the Whig necessity, out-balancing the myriad arguments and hatreds ranged against George II, that kept the crown so firmly upon his periwigged head.

We wandered down the pictures in the King's Gallery, square equestrian portraits of Charles XI and XII of Sweden, George of Denmark, Louis XIV; London panoramas by Scott, Somerset House on the river, Westminster with blue water and white and yellow houses about it, formal and at peace in a noonday sun. There is a view of London from the hill at Greenwich, with the Queen's House in the foreground, by Danckwerts. But in 1760 this room contained a very different set of pictures. At one end hung the great Van Dyck of Charles I and d'Epemon, the king on his white horse, "an august and noble figure, with some dejection in his countenance . . . at a little distance it has more of the life than a picture, and one is almost ready to get out of the horse's way and bow to the king." At the opposite end of the room hung another Van Dyck; Charles I, Henrietta Maria and two of their children. There was also a Titian, a Tintoretto, a Raphael, pictures by Schiavone, Bassanio, Carraci, and a Madonna by Van Dyck. The light, which at no time in that afternoon had been particularly helpful, was failing swiftly as we walked down the King's Gallery, passing between the pictures and the eleven tall windows through which we could see the narrow piece of lawn and the laurels, and beyond the railings the children and their nurses scurrying home to tea. The sky was

darkening, and some big drops of rain began to fall; the nurses put up the hoods of their perambulators and pushed their charges all the faster down the tarmac paths. In the farthest distance lay the great crude banks of earth, routed up in the process of providing bomb-trenches in the park. We went slowly down the gallery, turning to look as we neared the farther door; it was empty, hollow-seeming, and mysterious, with the riding figures looming at the extreme end and the waning daylight glimmering through the windows, the marble fireplace ghostly white on the brown wall.

"Let's be quick," I said to Perdita, "before they turn on lights, or whatever they might do. That would spoil it so. Here we are in Queen Victoria's childhood; do you feel up to it now?"

Coming from the long gallery, one steps abruptly from the world of William and the Georges, heavy, portentous, and finely spaced, into the hugger-mugger gaiety of Queen Victoria's childhood. With admirable piety these rooms have been restored to their pristine Victorian state. Here are the bright chintz birds upon the bedroom walls, the papier-mâché tables, the woolwork, the chairs, the doll's-house, the battered toys, that little Princess Victoria must have loved.

"It's wrong, of course, to find all this quite so exasperating, isn't it?" I said to Perdita as we gazed at these things, "and I have no grudge against Princess Victoria herself, and it's all very popular and rather interesting; but why, why, why must she be given preference over William and Mary or the Georges? Can't somebody take the trouble to collect furniture and put it into those rooms? Victoria is now so revoltingly fashionable, though, that I suppose it's no good complaining; this beastly cult for all the ugly, ornamental rubbish the Victorians admired is pure snobbery; how I hate it."

We hurried past these royal relics and on through the Great Drawing-Room into the Cupola Room, Kent's most famous, and perhaps his greatest work. Here the high

ceiling is domed, and the four sides are coated with the star of the Garter; the walls are panelled with oak, and upon them arms, flags and trophies are painted in gold and brown. The door-cases are of polished white marble, with Ionic pilasters and weighty entablatures surmounted by a bust. Six niches of white marble round the room hold gilded leaden effigies of deities—Ceres, Mercury, Venus, Minerva, Bacchus, Apollo, and on brackets above them were once set "bustos" of Roman poets. In the centre of the room stands a hideous and enormous clock, "the Temple of the Four Great Monarchies," with silver reliefs of Augustus, Ninus, Cyrus, and Alexander, the whole constructed for Augusta Princess of Wales.

"If we stand in a corner," I said to Perdita, "we can see it all better."

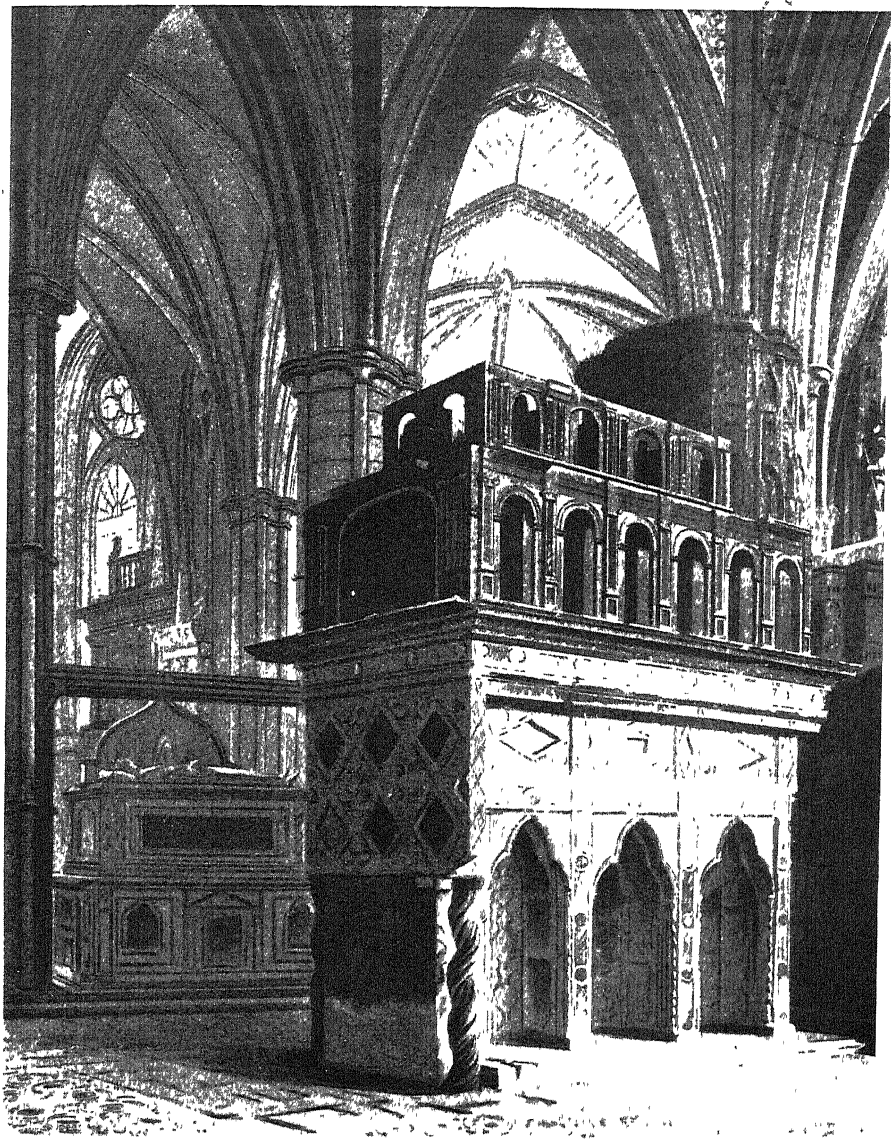
We groped our way to a corner in the gathering gloom, and gazed up at the domed roof, now filled with shadows and across at the white doorways, the niches, the gods and goddesses of deep, shimmering gilt. It is an impressive room, a pompous room, even a magnificent room; but it is lonely, lonely and cold.

## VIII

### WESTMINSTER ABBEY

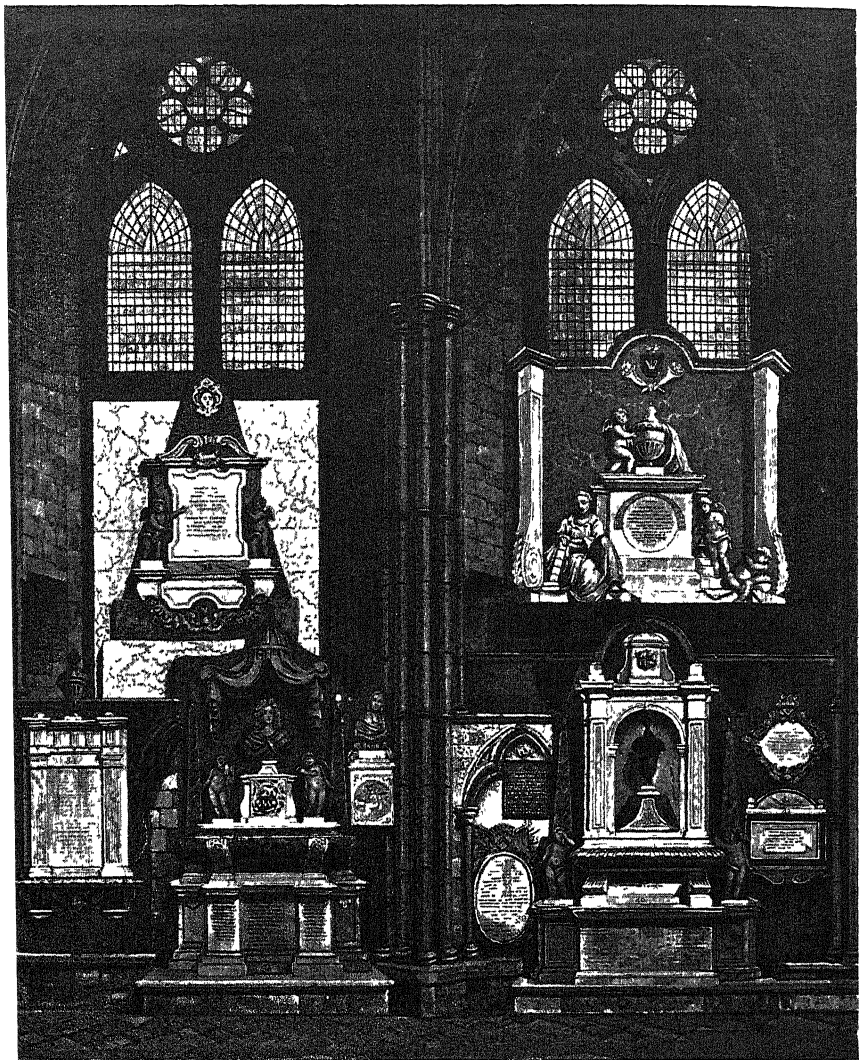
AS the afternoon faded in the long galleries of Kensington, I realized that the time had come to take Perdita to Westminster Abbey. I had deliberately reserved the Abbey for the last. Like the gorgeous foreign portrait of James II at Greenwich, it could, I felt, be used to emphasize certain points. The Georgian adventure, painted Lord Hervey and stout Queen Caroline, had to some extent completed our review of post-Reformation England. It was now essential to try to achieve a synthesis. Our experiences in the pursuit of the characteristics of each successive age must, somehow, be fused. But to do this successfully, I knew that we had first to go back yet farther into the past. Perdita must be made to penetrate beyond the heraldic gardens and the purple walls of Hampton Court, discovering on her way figures far fainter than those of Jane Seymour or the poet Surrey, on into the distant glimmering world of Gothic kingship. Once that grey and gold realm had been explored—the grey of the mists growing thicker, the gold of the sparkling crowns—she must return equipped to comprehend the staggering continuity of the past. And in London only Westminster Abbey can help one to this. Here beneath the high upsweeping arches the centuries are superbly juxtaposed. Here each brave new world has been laid to rest. Crocketed monuments of the Tudors; trophied Caroline tombs; curling marble sentiment of the Age of Reason; writhing Victories, Fame with wings; Victorian statesmen in their robes, standing upon fulsome records of their staunch virtues; *relievos* with the profiles of Edwardian notabilities—towering up the walls, surging from the floors, cascades of polished stone, turrets of alabaster, “tombs like palaces to baffle death.” And here and there, in the magnificent confusion, the tranquil prostration of mitred abbots and





46 The Shrine of Edward the Confessor at Westminster Abbey

*From Ackermann's "Westminster"*



47 Monuments in the North Aisle of the Nave of Westminster Abbey

*From Ackermann's "Westminster"*

armoured princes and coroneted kings, medievalism lying there peacefully awaiting the Resurrection of the Dead. The chapels of the saints, set like the petals of a flower about that tremendous focal point of medieval piety, the shrine of Edward the Confessor, bear names whose sound rings out the full, clear note of the Middle Ages—Benedict, Edmund, Thomas Martyr, Nicholas, Paul, John the Baptist, Jesus Chapel, and the tiny, gaudy oratory of Our Lady of the Pew. Looking round the Abbey it is hard to remember for what purposes these polygonal chapels were built: it was not to provide pigeon-holes for the bodies of Stuart peeresses and Tudor knights. This lofty store-house of the eminent dead had once an intense spiritual significance. Each chapel, now stuffed with monuments, had once its altar, at which once mass was said. The carping of Catholics at the depredations of the Anglican Church is detestable, and yet I constantly believe, as I do not believe about Salisbury or Chichester or even Durham Cathedral, that Westminster Abbey, impregnated as it is with the very aroma of the Middle Ages, is unhappy in Anglican hands. There is a peculiar lack of meaning in the candles by Eleanor of Castile's tomb; and over the shrine of St. Edward, once shimmering with silver and jewels, bright with mosaic, the Abbey authorities have now hung a brocaded pall—discreet amends for the crimes against piety and taste committed at the inception of their Church. The empty chantries and the superfluous candles stress pathetically the changed character of this abbey church.

"I think," said Perdita, to whom I had confided these views, "that you are strangely bigoted. And more strangely inconsistent. In St. Paul's you told me you admired Anglican ceremonies."

"So I do, so I do, but about the Abbey I feel very firm. One has to be firm about the Abbey in every way, you know; firm with it too. To understand it properly and not to get muddled and lost, and to see the things that are important as well as the things that aren't, is terrifically hard work. I even believe one must

resort to chronology, and get a skeleton of dates in one's mind."

The original church at Westminster, standing up among the fields by the river, visible for miles around, was dedicated in the year 1065, on Holy Innocents' Day. Edward the Confessor's death followed soon upon the dedication, and then came the battle of Hastings and the Norman monarchy. For nearly two hundred years the church remained more or less untouched. Then, in 1245, Henry III, as great a patron of the Arts as the Prince Consort, began to pull the Abbey down. By 1296 the whole eastern limb of the church had been rebuilt. A Lady Chapel which had been added in 1220, was allowed to survive until the turn of the fifteenth century, when in 1503 it was swept away to make room for the mausoleum of Henry VII. The next royal builder of the Abbey after Henry III was Richard II. This decorative and determined king continued his ancestor's work, copying the arches and continuing the bays of the nave, till in 1388 no trace of St. Edward's church remained. The usurper, Henry IV, did little for the Abbey, his son much. To Henry V we owe the ornate elaborate chantry chapel swung on a bridge above the level of the Confessor's shrine and approached by newel stairs. It was in this chantry, leaning over the parapet and looking down on St. Edward's tomb, that Henry VI would stand with the abbot, pointing out the site he proposed for his own grave. After his death, when the possibility of his canonization became imminent, the monks of Westminster embarked on a lawsuit with those of Chertsey, where the dead king's body actually lay, and of Windsor, where it was ultimately placed. Depositions were made by witnesses who had seen the king come often to the Abbey, and had heard him say over and over again that here he wished his bones to rest. Prefacing his remarks with his favourite oath of "forsooth and forsooth"—in itself as suggestive of the royal mildness and indecision, as ever was George II's "Pooh! Stuff!" of intolerance and irritability—Henry VI would walk about the Abbey, kneeling perhaps at St. Edward's tomb, pointing out with his staff

the place he had chosen, between the shrine and the monument of Henry III. On one occasion it is recorded that this choice was dented out with an instrument on the inlaid floor; not long ago this mark was discovered, beneath the floor-cloth now protecting the mosaic. But people took little notice of the king's wishes in life, and when, still pious but mentally disintegrated, he was murdered in 1471, the problem of his burial was not allowed to exercise anyone's mind for long. But it is for some reason easy to imagine him, as one stands below Henry V's chantry; a pale figure behind the parapet, in his long black robe, with his thin aquiline nose, hanging underlip, and nervous, hesitant hands. It is the only vivid glimpse one gets of him; but it is enough. During Henry VI's turgid reign the building of the Abbey not unnaturally languished. His successor's wife, Queen Elizabeth Woodville, however, found an opportunity in all the steely scurry of the civil wars to add a chapel dedicated to St. Erasmus, the fourth-century bishop whose entrails were drawn out in one of the Diocletian persecutions. What made the Queen choose this particular martyr it is perhaps useless to try to divine. Elizabeth Woodville has always seemed to me an interesting, indeed an enigmatic, figure. I suppose I first came across her in Bulwer Lytton's *Last of the Barons*; ever since I have wanted to know her better. Her apparent ability, the constant tragedies and upheavals of her life, her complacency in her daughter's marriage to Richard III, the accusations of sorcery brought against her by enemies, the virulence with which she was hated by so many people, contribute to give her a certain fascination. Was there perhaps some strain in her which came out later in the Tudors? Is it to Elizabeth Woodville that one is to look for some slight explanation of the streaks of passion and brutality that marked her descendants? Who can say? The demure little portrait of her in the Ashmolean at Oxford, and its two replicas elsewhere, give one no key, save for the suggestion of conscious, indeed self-conscious, coyness and a kind of veiled discretion. Elizabeth Woodville did not in any case leave a permanent mark on

the Abbey; her Erasmus chapel was destroyed in the course of the work commanded by her son-in-law, Henry VII. In 1540, the year of the Cleves marriage fiasco and of Thomas Cromwell's fall, Westminster Abbey was dissolved, and so, save for two years under Mary when Abbot Feckenham strove to restore the grandeur that was Rome, the prayers, the candles, the processions to the Confessor's shrine, the Abbey has remained—a shell of medieval spirituality slowly but surely filled with the impressive materialism of forty successive decades of English aristocratic life. There are but twenty-six medieval effigies, two of wood, eight of bronze, sixteen of stone and alabaster, twenty-six, but among them infinitely the most beautiful things that the Abbey has to show.

"It is essential," I said to Perdita as we entered the Abbey and passed down between the white monuments of the south transept, "to start off at the right place; and there's no question in my mind that that is the Confessor's chapel."

We walked quickly through the church, and up the wooden steps to St. Edward's tomb. By doing so we linked ourselves automatically with that great chain of pilgrims and sightseers who through the centuries have climbed to gaze upon the splendid Plantagenets, those rigid gilt-bronze kings and queens, lying there like a race of demi-gods, with their beautiful tapering hands and their foreheads calm and crowned. "In this place there is a chapel. . . . In the midst of the Chapel . . . is the raised tomb of Edward the Confessor, King of England who has been sainted"—the bald description of the *Sieur de Maisse*, who came to London in November 1597 as ambassador from Henri IV to Elizabeth, gives us all that we need to know. In this place there is a chapel . . . a chapel indeed, a supreme chapel, the very kernel of London. Here round the mutilated shrine they lie, Edward III with his slender fingers and his furrowed brow, Richard II with Anne of Bohemia, plump and regal at his side, Eleanor of Castile with her flowing hair, and heraldic cushions, Henry III high up, invisible, upon his sumptuous catafalque of porphyry and Italian mosaic.

Before the still, gilded dignity of these aloof personages later royal generations totter and wilt. As one looks in wonder at these remote abstractions of monarchy, spectacular and solemn, more recent occupants of the throne of St. Edward seem dingy by comparison. Who can be contrasted with these beings of divine passivity and poetic beauty? Can George II and Queen Caroline, lying there across the way in Henry VII's chapel, beneath the black and white paving squares? Can Anne or William or Mary, packed neatly side by side in the royal vault, with the Prince of Denmark and Charles II next them, and their bowels in monogrammed boxes at their feet? Can Charles II himself, dusky and rollicking, James II in all his Roman grandeur, or even their melancholy, small-minded father, pale and martyred, be compared to one of these? James I, wordy and lurching, Anne of Denmark, the great, the immortal Elizabeth, Mary Tudor with her religious angularity, Edward VI feeble, unkingly, Henry VIII who loomed across an entire century—which of these, in a final analysis, would tally triumphantly with the Plantagenets?

Direct thine eyes round sainted Edward's shrine,  
On earth as valued as Peruvia's mine;  
If royal dust were gold; for here the place  
Is paved with princes and a regal race.

The eighteenth century, in the person of Mr. John Dart, the antiquarian poetaster who wrote an account of the Abbey, published in 1742, paid tribute to the Plantagenet dead.

"And yet," I said to Perdita, "it's all very deceptive. They were real people, and, no doubt, little different in quality to the Stuarts or the Hanover kings; though one likes to think of them as having acuter spiritual perceptions. It's partly the tombs, I'm sure, and their very perfection that makes each Plantagenet seem so far away and so improbable. Uther or Edward I, it seems to make no difference; except that Edward I, to me, is an acutely disagreeable character."

We wandered across to the grey-brown table-tomb of

King Edward, seven plain slabs of marble with an inscription half-effaced. I do not know why I feel so strongly about Edward I. Perhaps it is the pall of praise beneath which posterity has agreed to smother him. He has been called the only really successful English sovereign; he has been called the English Justinian; he has been called, by his nineteenth-century biographer, "brave, affectionate, just, pure, devout, frugal, dignified, persevering"—all the Victorian virtues, in the Victorian order lavished upon him. And, indeed, Edward I seems to have been a man whom the world of Balmoral and of Ouida could immediately understand. Imperialistic, relentlessly able, militarist, virtuous, and probably just, he made wars and devised legal statutes with unswerving precision. It was not, however, the Victorians who resuscitated Edward I. They received the tradition, ripened by centuries of reverence, that he was by far the greatest of our kings. One of his contemporaries, the anonymous author of the hostile *Song of Lewes*, referred to him as a "panther for inconstancy"; but on the whole his own century acclaimed him, and the succeeding ones have meekly followed suit. My detestation of him is thus totally illogical. I only know that I get a distinct malicious pleasure from Edward II's negligence to carry out any of his father's wishes. Dying at Burgh-on-the-Sands in Cumberland, at the age of sixty-eight, Edward I charged his son on his death-bed to carry his body through Scotland with the army till that country should be subdued. This macabre scheme was never, in fact, put into effect. Edward II broke off the Scottish campaign on which his father had set his heart, and the old king's embalmed corpse was trundled solemnly down England to Waltham Abbey, whence after fifteen weeks it came to rest in Westminster in a heavy, simple tomb. Late in the century elaborate respect was, however, being paid to Edward I's memory; an ordinance of Richard II, his great-grandson, laid down that the cerecloths about the body should be from time to time ceremonially renewed. I complained about Edward I to Perdita.



"But wasn't he simply a type of his age?" she asked; "wasn't militarism implicit in medieval life? But he sounds pretty beastly, I must say: had he no human features?"

"Only his affection for Eleanor of Castile," I replied, "the funerary crosses he put up wherever her body rested on its journey here; and the way he would speak of her after her death as the *chère reine*—whence," I added informatively, "Charing Cross."

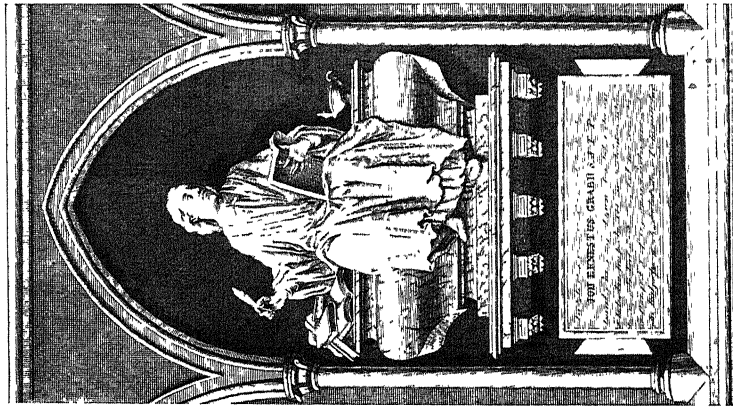
Eleanor of Castile lies buried in the Confessor's chapel, on the same side as her husband. Between them rises the tall tomb of her father-in-law, Henry III. Most lovely and yet most impersonal of all the Abbey effigies, the Spanish queen seems neither dead nor, properly, asleep. She seems wrapped in an hypnotic torpor. Entranced, she reclines there stiffly, with her long loose hair static upon two skew-wise pillows, and a crown about her head. Her left hand clasps idly at her breast a pendant, perhaps a crucifix or a reliquary jewel, hanging on a chain from her neck. Her right hand held a sceptre long since gone. In the smooth symmetrical face and the shuttered eyes there is the suggestion of a low-pitched vitality, belying the rigidity of the bronze draperies. Beneath the metal folds a heart seems slowly throbbing, as if this effigy anticipates by four hundred years the fairy imagination of Perrault when he created the enchanted princess. Serenely she has let the centuries drift by: she has not watched each successive decade with the beady attention of a Tudor portrait, nor the lazy sybaritic Lely stare. Yet in her lifetime Eleanor of Castile was both alert and something of a sybarite. A Castilian by birth and upbringing, she found herself suddenly expected to leave the sun-drenched palaces of Burgos for the windy fortress chambers of Carnarvon and Conway Castle. And married to the martial heir of the King of England, obliged to breed royal infants in surroundings of unparalleled gloom. Tradition credits her with the introduction of tapestry to this country, and the lists of her household plate suggest a certain degree of comfort. Her plate was made by the King's goldsmith, and included thirty-four beakers of silver

and gold, ten gold chalices, ten silver-gilt cups, over a hundred smaller cups of silver, cups of jasper, dishes of silver, salts of gold, alms-bowls, silver baskets, enamelled jugs with figures of the King and Queen upon them. She ate with knives with silver sheaths, and forks of crystal, or of silver with handles of ebony and ivory. Her looking-glasses and combs were of silver-gilt, her needle of silver in a leather case. Most splendid of all were the Queen's crowns. Of these there seem to have been three, one set with rubies, emeralds, and pearls, a second studded wholly with pearls of India, a third, perhaps the State crown worn at her coronation, was a great crown of gold flashing with sapphires, emeralds, rubies, and big Eastern pearls. Like the Hampton Court inventories, these lists of belongings reveal with a momentary flicker the flashing brilliance of that far-away court. Another glimpse of Eleanor of Castile is afforded by a contemporary panegyric, rendered into rather Tennysonian English by the antiquary Pennant, to whom Gilbert White addressed many of his Selborne letters. This time it is as swift as the click of a camera's eye, and as distant as the most remote horizon:

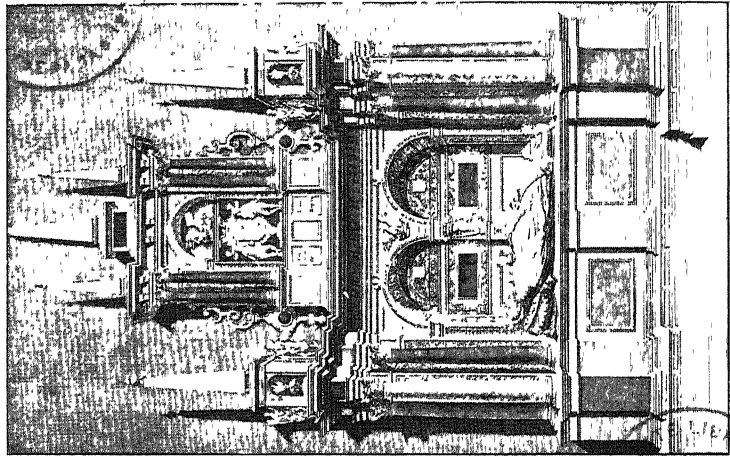
In her oriel there she was,  
Closed well with royal glass;  
Filled it was with imagery,  
Every window by and by.

But these four lines do not aid in reanimation of the Spanish queen. Her jewelled figure persistently eludes the spotlight and she remains half-seen, admirable, down the corridor of the centuries, with Gothic arches meeting in the darkness above her coroneted head.

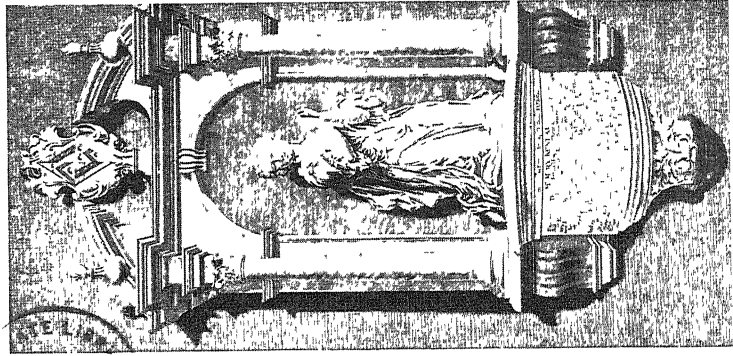
Very different is one's vision of Edward III's wife, Philippa of Hainault, whose bruised alabaster figure lies opposite Queen Eleanor's gilt-bronze. Perhaps it is Froissart, read for many years with a romantic interest, that makes Philippa seem vivid and definite. Of all the shadowy throng of medieval queens, Philippa of Hainault alone stands four-square. The burghers of Calais, the white



48 The Grabius Monument,  
Westminster Abbey

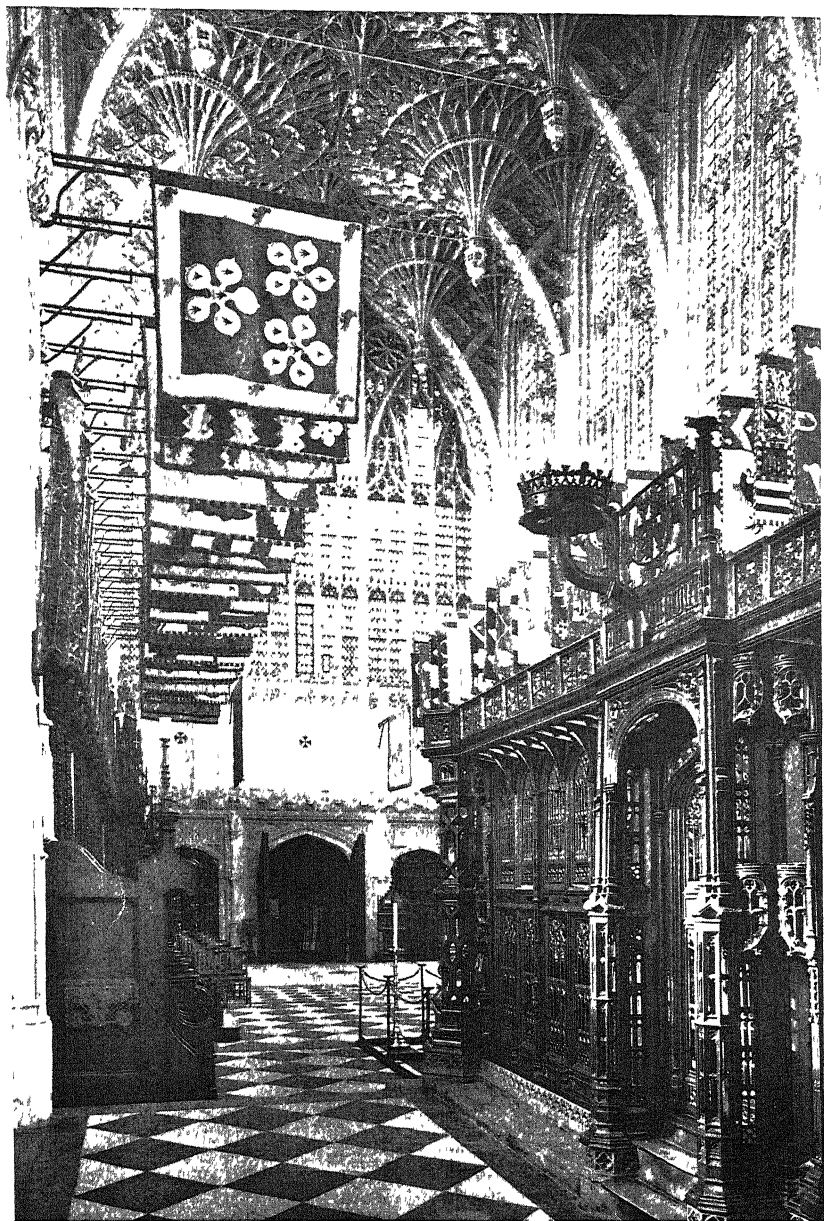


49 The Hertford Monument,  
Westminster Abbey



50 The Kendall Monument,  
Westminster Abbey

*All from Dart's "Westminster"*



51 Henry VII's Chapel, Westminster Abbey

palfrey at Neville's Cross, these are incidents one knows as well as those of Elizabeth before the Armada or the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot. I suppose it is all due to Froissart; if such an equation be possible, one might say that Philippa of Hainault owes as much to Froissart as Queen Caroline to Lord Hervey. And though the scrupulous and reverent secretary of the fourteenth century can scarcely be compared to the gossiping, cynical lord-in-waiting of the eighteenth, a parallel, if an unprofitable one, could be drawn between Philippa of Hainault and Caroline of Ansbach. Since the days of Oxford essays I have had my doubts of the value of these historical comparisons. In the instance of these two sturdy northern princesses, solid in appearance and in character, wise in the regencies they exercised over England in their husbands' absences, I am more than a little uncertain.

"It raises the issue," I said to Perdita, "of whether people have been the same in every period, or radically different in each of them. And equating these two doesn't help one to understand either, does it? Thomas Cromwell and Disraeli, Gaveston and Buckingham, those are the comparisons that are some good. But I hold to this one of Philippa and Queen Caroline, if only because it reminds one of the ribbon development of the English monarchy."

"You mean the continuity?"

"Well, you could call it that."

We looked at Philippa of Hainault's battered face. It is not essentially medieval, and in spite of the ugly, fashionable head-dress, the hair strained and shaved away from the forehead, the ears showing against the neck, it conforms to a heavy type that turns one's mind towards the eighteenth century. It is easier to think of this plump, square woman in the gardens of Herrenhausen or on the terraces of Potsdam than in Froissart's translucent world of virelays and banners, knights galloping across the Provençale landscape, kings' ransoms, internationalism, chivalry and cathedral cloisters. The alabaster has not escaped the centuries unscathed. The right arm is smashed off above

the elbow, the canopy and crockets broken up, the kirtle and bodice seared with pocket-knife initials. But there remains a strange dignity in this wax-coloured, ample figure. Perrault is far away, however, unless we care to reckon with Cinderella's elder sisters. Here is none of the fairy-tale enchantment of Eleanor of Castile. Edward III's wife looks what she was, an able, determined Fleming, pious, sensible, unromantic, the least whimsical of English queens. Yet from Froissart one can recapture something of that aroma of affection and reverence with which she was surrounded by her husband's subjects. In that superb piece of early Tudor literature, Lord Berners's translation of the *Chronicles*, published in the early 'twenties of the sixteenth century, when the medieval scene was fading but was still understood, Froissart's account of her death-bed is a remarkably moving passage: "There fell in Englande a hevy case and a comon, howbeit it was right pyteouse for the kyng, his chyl dren and all his realme. For the good quene of Englande, that so many good dedes had done in her tyme, and so many knights socoured, and ladyes and damosels comforted, and had so largely departed of her goodes to her people, and naturally loved always the nacyon of Heynaulte, the countrey where she was borne: She fell sicke in the castell of Wyndsore, the which sicknesse contynewed on her so longe, that there was no remedye but dethe. And the good lady, whanne she knew and perceyved that there was with her no remedy but dethe, she desyred to speke with the kynge her husbande." Here follows a report of their conversation, and of the queen's three dying requests, the last being, "Sir, I require you that it may please you to take none other sepulture, whensoever it shall please God to call you out of this transytorie lyfe but beside me in Westmynster." "Thus," continues the chronicler, "the good quene of Englande dyed in the yere of our lorde MCCCCLXIX, in the vigil of our lady in the middes of August." Standing in St. Edward's chapel one can accurately picture that late summer funeral, the cortège with tapers and priests and mourners, and an effigy of the

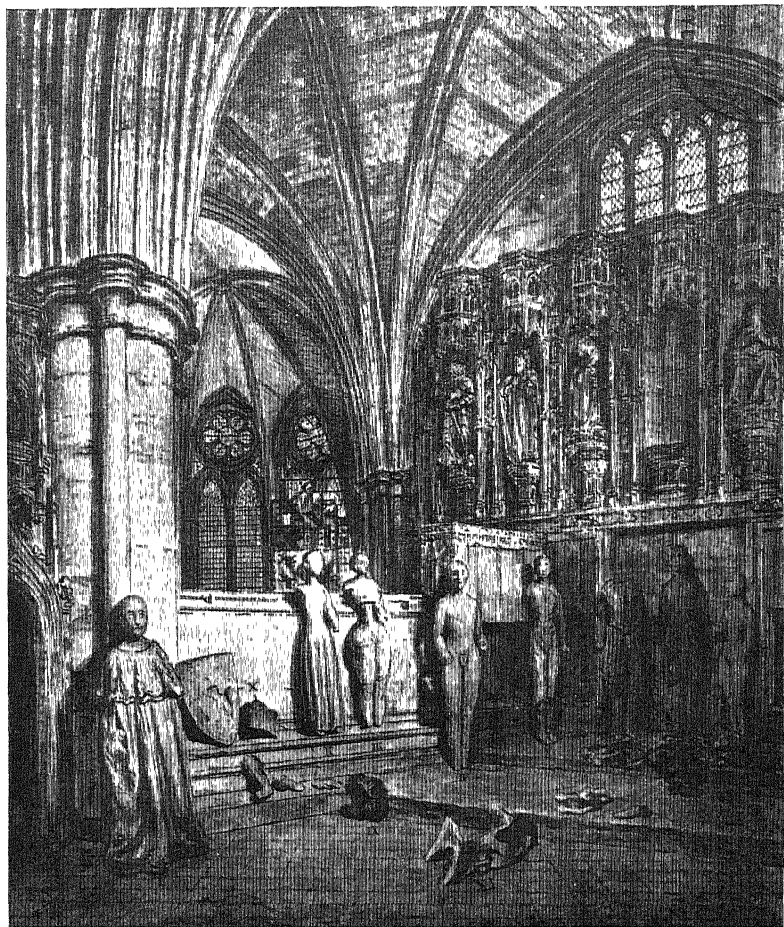
queen in wood, sumptuously dressed, making its way to the new tomb behind the high altar. Eleanor of Castile would already be lying there, peaceful and golden in the rich, wavering light cast by the candles perpetually burning on the iron grille beside her tomb. Between the two tombs of Eleanor and Philippa, the queen from the north and the queen from the south, Antwerp and Burgos, Henry V built his chantry chapel, the stairs winding up inside the turrets, and the solemn stone saints gazing down upon the sarcophagi of kings. It is stimulating, too, to remember that both these women, now known to us only by the effigies, once stood where we may still stand, in the Confessor's chapel, and knelt perhaps where we may no longer kneel, in the niches beneath his shrine, with the tiny pilgrims' crosses scabbled on the inlaid surface, and the barley-sugar pillars twisting upwards at the corners and the shimmering gold mosaic. I like best to think of Philippa of Hainault in that ideal setting for her, Bamburgh Castle, with its stalwart grandeur, a vast pink stone fortress on the wind-lashed Northumbrian coast, as I have seen it on an autumn evening, the mists wreathing about it, the sea-mews wheeling round above it, the water, olive-green and sinister, thwacking rhythmically against the jutting rocks below. Not far away lies Holy Island, a purplish streak to seaward and on either hand at the cliff-foot stretch the chocolate-coloured Bonington beaches, coarse sea-grass, breakwaters with green weed clinging to them; in one's ears the dull pounding of the sea, meaningless, heaving, throwing itself with a ponderous avidity upon the land. The castle itself has been exaggeratedly restored, but that does not matter; the place, the coast, the cliffs, the sea, the sky, the gulls, Holy Island, the autumn and the evening are unchanged since Philippa of Hainault and her ladies—Alicia, Euphemia, Johanna, and the rest—walked on the battlements of Bamburgh nearly six hundred years ago.

At the head of Queen Philippa's tomb lies her husband, Edward III, an archaic bearded figure of patriarchal beauty, with a face carefully lined and modelled, and slim

and sensitive hands. Beyond him again in this hallowed indian file, lie Richard II and Anne of Bohemia, side by side upon a great square tomb. But I felt we must not linger with the purely medieval for too long, if the Abbey was to give us, as it should, a general conspectus of the centuries, and the vision of interpenetrating eras, world within world. As we stepped down from the Confessor's chapel we passed the headless oaken effigy of Henry V. The head, of solid silver, was stolen at the Dissolution and the silver plates that clothed the figure peeled away. For many years there lay beside this tomb the embalmed body of Henry's wife, Katharine of Valois, "in a chest or coffin with a loose cover, to be seen and handled by any who much desire it." This was as Weever saw it in the days of Charles I. At the Restoration even more entertainment value was extracted from this pathetic presence. Pepys, with all the gusto of the insensitive, records that he has "this day kissed a queen," and the amusing pastime of caressing this crumpled mummy for an extra charge of twopence was continued until the reign of George III. Dart describes its state in the 1730's as "fit to represent to us the End of Beauty, Greatness and what else sublunary things we boast" . . . "the bones," he records, "firmly united and thinly clothed with flesh, like scrapings of tanned leather." A humane dean ultimately took pity on the body and had it moved away.

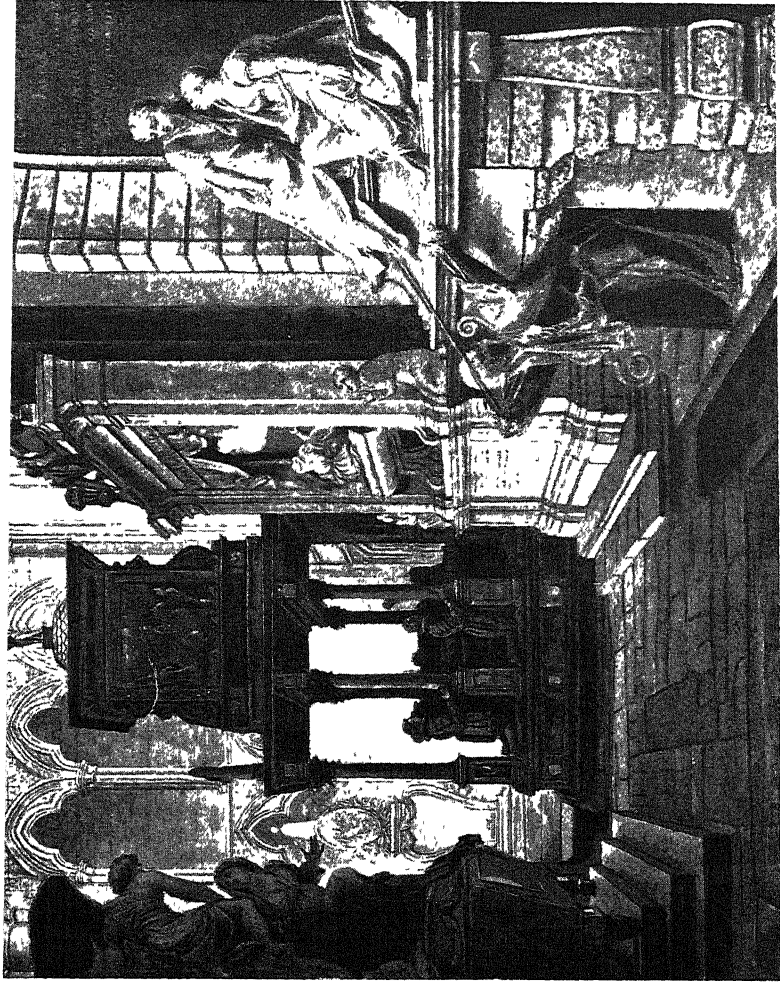
A distance not commensurate with the actual floor-space separates Henry VII's burial chapel from that of the Plantagenet kings. The restrained perpendicular arches, spiritually as technically farther removed from earlier Gothic than is often admitted, provide setting for tombs at which Eleanor of Castile might have gazed wide-eyed. One's first impression of the chapel, through the proscenium of the entrance at the stair-top—the great bronze doors, ponderous, fretted with badges, swung back—is of an airy temple of light. The windows, once ruby-red with the Tudor rose, are now filled with plain glass. The walls, with their myriad statues, have been recently refurbished





52 Funeral Effigies of the Kings and Queens of England, stored in Henry V's Chantry, Westminster Abbey, from a drawing by John Carter (1786)

*Sir E. Coates*



53 The Chapel of St. John the Evangelist, Westminster Abbey, showing the Norris and Nightingale Tombs

*From Johann's "Westminster"*

and are washed with white. On either side of the chapel, over the oaken stalls, the crude, bright banners of the Bath knights hang down. At the west end of Henry VII's tomb a garish painted altar has lately been placed, with a self-conscious scarlet frontal the colour of thin blood. These renovations have given to the chapel an almost symbolic clarity. Personified by the Plantagenet effigies, the Middle Ages lie entombed in the semi-darkness, a twilight shot through by the lemon shafts of the sun cast diagonally from the clerestory windows. But the first Tudor, lapped in lead in his great Italian sarcophagus, with the curly-haired angels of the southern Renaissance perched on its four corners, seems to demand the full bright glare of the day. With Elizabeth of York hooded beside him, her hair falling forward from beneath her coif, Henry VII is set for ever within the splendid protective hedge of heraldic bronze which surrounds his tomb. Types of a new age, they lie there, ambiguous crowned figures on the threshold of two worlds.

"Why is it?" I asked, as Perdita and I peered on tiptoe through the bronze walls about the tomb, "that Henry VII who is always called—isn't he?—the first modern King of England, should have had such an inscrutably medieval look? I like to think of him in this chapel, though, above vaults filled with the kings and queens for whom indirectly he was responsible—the Scottish marriage of his daughter Margaret and all that."

It may be the mere fact that one cannot get near to them that makes the gilt effigies of Henry VII and Elizabeth, defended by the exquisite Italian cherubim, so mysterious. Because they cannot be approached they seem unapproachable. This aloofness corresponds in a certain way to one's feelings about Henry VII. Toppling at the brink of the sixteenth century, he seems an indefinite and incomprehensible character, more so indeed than many of the earlier kings. He does not share in the unearthly aura which twinkles about some of the Plantagenets in my mind, but all the same I have no very clear idea of what he was like.

Fundamentally I feel him to be as unsympathetic an individual as Lord Hertford of the Wallace Collection, and for much the same reasons. The face in his portraits is sensitive, even apprehensive, but cautious and with thin, pallid lips. The face in fact of the miser which posterity, carefree with epithets, has called him. Yet as one looks through at him between the bars and the Welsh dragons and the portcullis emblems of bronze, he seems strongly peaceful and benign.

In the northern and southern aisles of Henry VII's chapel, which, shut off from the body of it by the knights' stalls tapering sharply, seem detached and independent, tower the colossal monuments of Elizabeth of England and Mary Queen of Scots. Representatives of two utterly divergent ways of thought and life, remote from one another in religion as in psychology, both queens meet here within the mausoleum of their common progenitor. And the columns, arches, marbles, pillars, badges, the supporters and achievements from which these tombs are concocted are not dissimilar. Here is the ripened fruit of the English Renaissance, this tempestuous ostentation, this architectural solemnity of graves. Mary Stuart reclines amid polished columns beneath a canopy which seems too high for the little aisle. It is like some fantastic galleon assembled in an alabaster dockyard, waiting to be launched out across the world. Indeed, both these monuments, parallel one to the other, magnificent in their elaboration seem high-pooped ships of coloured marble sailing eastward in a waveless sea of stone. In each of them one can detect again an unconscious symbolism—Elizabeth, hawk-like, incisive, gripping her orb, with lions and shields scattered about her, Mary, soft-faced, with lace in her cap, her skirt in a thousand folds, on the roof of the tomb above her angels and unicorns. These monuments seem the culmination of that series of massive ornate memorials to Tudor noblewomen which is one of the most superb among the sequences of the Abbey tombs. Frances Countess of Hertford in St. Benedict's chapel; the Duchess of Suffolk in St. Edmund's; Anne

Duchess of Somerset, the Protector's widow, in St. Nicholas's; with her in the same place the extravagant massing of porphyry and alabaster under which lie Mildred Lady Burleigh and her daughter the Countess of Oxford. Here too is Winifred Marchioness of Winchester and farther on, in St. Paul's chapel, lies that Countess of Sussex who was a Sidney and founded the Cambridge college of her name. Margaret Lady Lennox, the mother of Darnley, is buried at the head of Mary Queen of Scots. Formal and painted and conscious of their worth, they lie back even more stiffly than the early queens, their hands more neatly folded, images of the inevitability of death. Above them up the walls creep the architraves and crockets of their tombs, and beside them the laudatory inscriptions announce their importance and, occasionally, their character. Once more we meet the sixteenth-century challenge to death, coupled with its acceptance of it. In the effigies of these stately women there is no effort made to suggest that they are alive. The faces are coloured, the robes painted, but that is all. Eleanor of Castile seems vital beside them. Not so, however, the tomb figures of a later age. With the Jacobean, it seems, came discontent with the tranquillity of this convention. Already in the figures of James I's children the infant Princesses Mary and Sophia, one tucked up in its cradle, one resting on its right arm, a certain illusion of life is once more apparent. In the Buckingham monument, too, is a sombre vitality, and as one wanders through the Abbey it is easy to watch each decade bringing with it an increase in funerary life. Foreign influences begin to predominate, clumsy imitations of the Medici tombs. Throughout the seventeenth century the figures gradually unbend. Draperies begin to flow or are swept up by an unseen wind, duchesses turn to one side, husbands and wives converse, admirals smile, poets begin to write, the aristocracy writhe and coil on their narrow brackets and pedestals. Expression infuses the marble faces—fatuity, virtue, coyness, resignation, mild pleasure, amazement, grief. They are all, I think, equally surprised to find themselves in the

Abbey and to know that they are dead at last. The Plantagenets are not surprised, because they built the Abbey to be dead in; the Tudor ladies are not surprised because in their starched grandeur they cultivated the idea of death. But these bewigged, puffy-faced statesmen and plump, emotional women strive bravely to persuade us that they are in fact not dead at all. "We are alive," they seem to cry from their niches and their sarcophagi, "look, look how alive we are, we are not rectilinear, our fingers are not rigid, we can wave our arms about." "Alive"—that is their cry; the cry of Sir Clowdisley Shovel, lymphatic, loosely poised on his ledge; of the Duke of Newcastle, too haughty to look down into the church or to turn his raised head; of Sir Isaac Newton, pointing as proof positive at two winged supple children holding a manuscript; of Sir Thomas Hardy in his Roman toga; of Gravius dangling his legs gaily over the lid of his sarcophagus, and dipping his pen in the ink. Last of all, as though to emphasize the truth of their ridiculous contention, comes the famous group of death and the Nightingale family—Joseph Nightingale and Lady Elizabeth, dramatic, recoiling, he protecting her with his outstretched arm from the unerring marksmanship of a skeleton poised to hurl a javelin at her heart. This scramble to simulate something they are not is lamentable indeed. The still Plantagenets and the unmoving Tudors seem comprehending of the eternal verities; these others do not.

"What's worse," I said to Perdita, "is the increasing mendacity of the inscriptions. As the people become more life-like, so they would have us believe they were repositories of *all* the virtues; but the tiresomeness of that side comes out best with Mrs. Kendall."

The odd climax of the list of the virtues of Mrs. Mary Kendall, who died at Epsom in 1709, and is shown kneeling excitedly between two red pillars on the wall of John the Baptist's chapel, is well known to Abbey visitors. We are told of the many excellencies of this admirable woman: "of a severe life, but of an easy conversation, courteous to all yet strictly sincere; humble without meanness; beneficent

without ostentation, devout without superstition"—and then that these accumulated qualities "rendered her in every way" worthy of that close union and friendship in which she lived with the Lady Catharine Jones." Bathos can go no farther; whatever may be said against Tudor England, it must at least be granted that it could have produced nothing so inane as this.

"About effigies looking alive," said Perdita, "didn't they do it at funerals? You remember the Cromwell things in the London Museum?"

"Yes," I said, "indeed, they did, and early too. The waxworks upstairs here in the Abbey, though, are hopelessly disappointing, except for an incredibly vivid portrait of the elder Pitt. But if we go down to the undercroft, we shall see what is left of the medieval funeral figures, which are very, very nearly the most stimulating things in the Abbey."

We walked quietly down the cloisters, with their weather-worn tablets and peeling wall surfaces, till we got to the undercroft door. Here, in this low chamber, lie the wooden blocks surmounted by careful, extraordinary portraits which served at the funeral ceremonies of Edward III, Katharine of Valois, Henry VII, Elizabeth of York, Mary Tudor, and Anne of Denmark. Two more, James I, squalid in torn felt and embryonic breeches, and Henry Prince of Wales, have lost their heads. Edward III's beard has been torn off, but across his body lie what are thought to be the remains of the very velvet and ermine robes in which he was crowned in 1327. Katharine of Valois alone is fully shaped, with a scarlet dress painted on the wood, and her head bald for a wig. Her features are taut, her face long; its proportions diametrically different to those of Elizabeth of York, who is shown with a bulbous forehead and cheeks reminiscent of her son Henry VIII. Perdita gazed entranced at these fascinating relics of what was once a regiment of wooden monarchs, jewelled, wigged, robed, a hundred strong. These decayed dolls evoke visions of an actuality that it is hard adequately to explain. Like Wellington's hearse, or the Wolsey apartments or the Dulwich roadways,

like Hertford House or the Sutherland staircase, like the dress of the Duchess of Teck or Lord Derwentwater's sheet, Henrietta Maria's gallery or the Kensington fresco, they urge one on to recreate a period and to recapture the aroma of a past. Nothing to look at, they are devoid in aesthetic value. To many who see them they must unquestionably seem absurd or quaint. Yet it is possible that they are as important as anything in Westminster Abbey. Hidden here and there in London, fuel only for the fire at which the sentimentalist or the romantic care to warm their hands, such slight, insignificant objects can at times be coaxed into revelations of deep intensity. A single room in Hampton Court, one gallery at Kensington, one tomb in the Abbey, one gravestone in St. Paul's, each of these may be capable of yielding a rich harvest of associations. Implicit in each of our legacies from an earlier generation lies the vibrating life of those now dead. Whether it is Mary Queen of Scots or Garibaldi, it is equally within our reach: but some of us fail to stretch out our hands.

I was saying something along these lines to Perdita as we emerged from the undercroft and began to go down the cloister towards the door into Victoria Street. As we approached it we saw suddenly that that drab thoroughfare was glistening beneath the relentless onslaught of a storm of heavy, perpendicular rain.



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